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# THE NEW MUTANTS

## THE DEMON BEAR SAGA

CLAREMONT • BUSCEMA • SIENKIEWICZ • McLEOD

EPIC COLLECTION

# THE NEW MUTANTS

## THE DEMON BEAR SAGA

VOLUME 2

*NEW MUTANTS #13-31 & ANNUAL #1*

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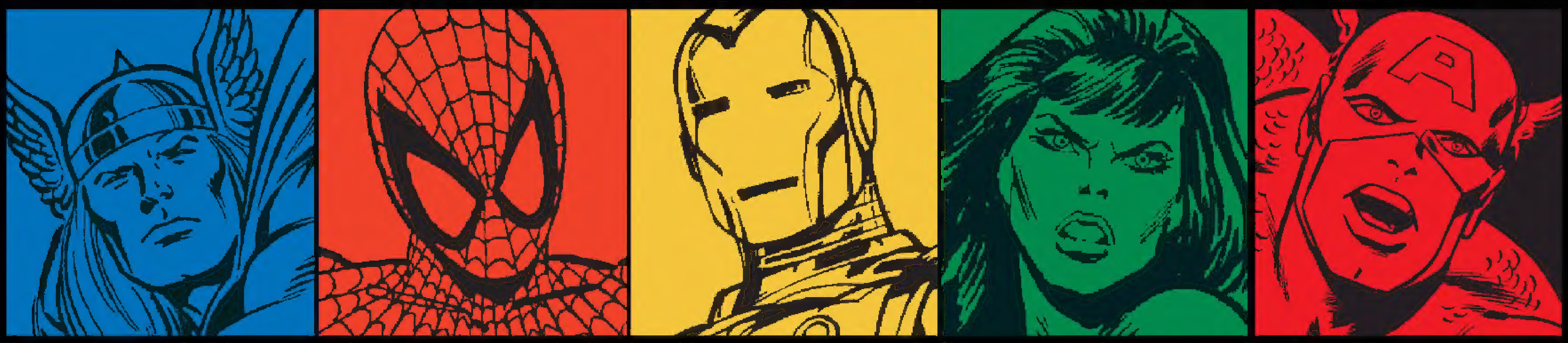

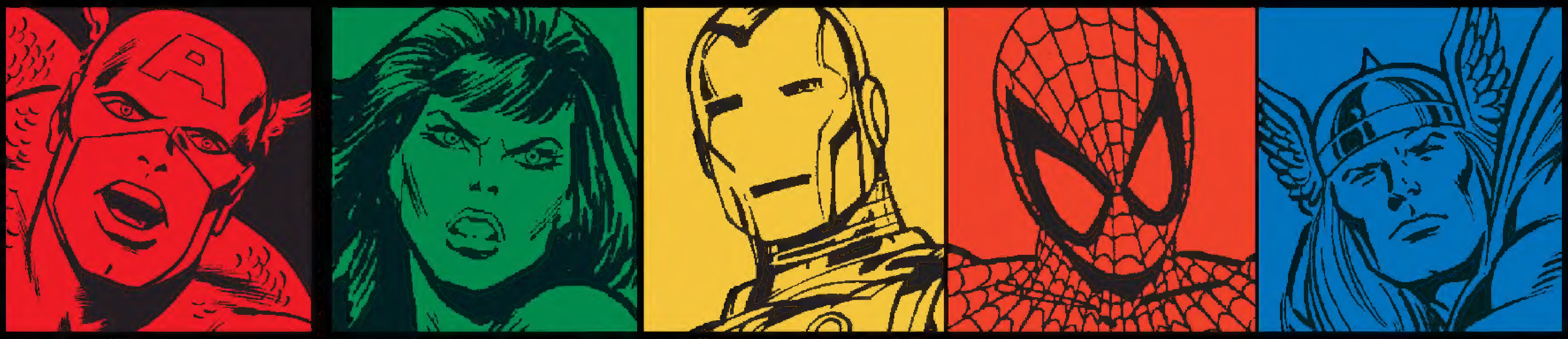

# EPIC COLLECTION

# THE NEW MUTANTS

## THE DEMON BEAR SAGA

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*NEW MUTANTS #13,* MARCH 1984
**"SCHOOL DAYSZE"**

*NEW MUTANTS #14,* APRIL 1984
**"DO YOU BELIEVE IN — MAGIK?"**

*NEW MUTANTS #15,* MAY 1984
**"SCAREDY CAT!"**

*NEW MUTANTS #16,* JUNE 1984
**"AWAY GAME!"**

*NEW MUTANTS #17,* JULY 1984
**"GETAWAY!"**

*NEW MUTANTS #18,* AUGUST 1984
**"DEATH-HUNT"**

*NEW MUTANTS #19,* SEPTEMBER 1984
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*NEW MUTANTS #20,* OCTOBER 1984
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*NEW MUTANTS #21,* NOVEMBER 1984
**"SLUMBER PARTY!"**

*NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL #1,* 1984
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*NEW MUTANTS #22,* DECEMBER 1984
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*NEW MUTANTS #23,* JANUARY 1985
**"SHADOWMAN"**

*NEW MUTANTS #24,* FEBRUARY 1985
**"THE HOLLOW HEART"**

*NEW MUTANTS #25,* MARCH 1985
**"THE ONLY THING TO FEAR..."**

*NEW MUTANTS #26,* APRIL 1985
**"LEGION"**

*NEW MUTANTS #27,* MAY 1985
**"INTO THE ABYSS"**

*NEW MUTANTS #28,* JUNE 1985
**"SOULWAR"**

*NEW MUTANTS #29,* JULY 1985
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*NEW MUTANTS #30,* AUGUST 1985
**"THE SINGER & HER SONG"**

*NEW MUTANTS #31,* SEPTEMBER 1985
**"SATURDAY NIGHT FIGHT"**

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THE NEW MUTANTS™
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FORGET IT, KITTY! YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR US "X-BABIES!"
BLEVINS

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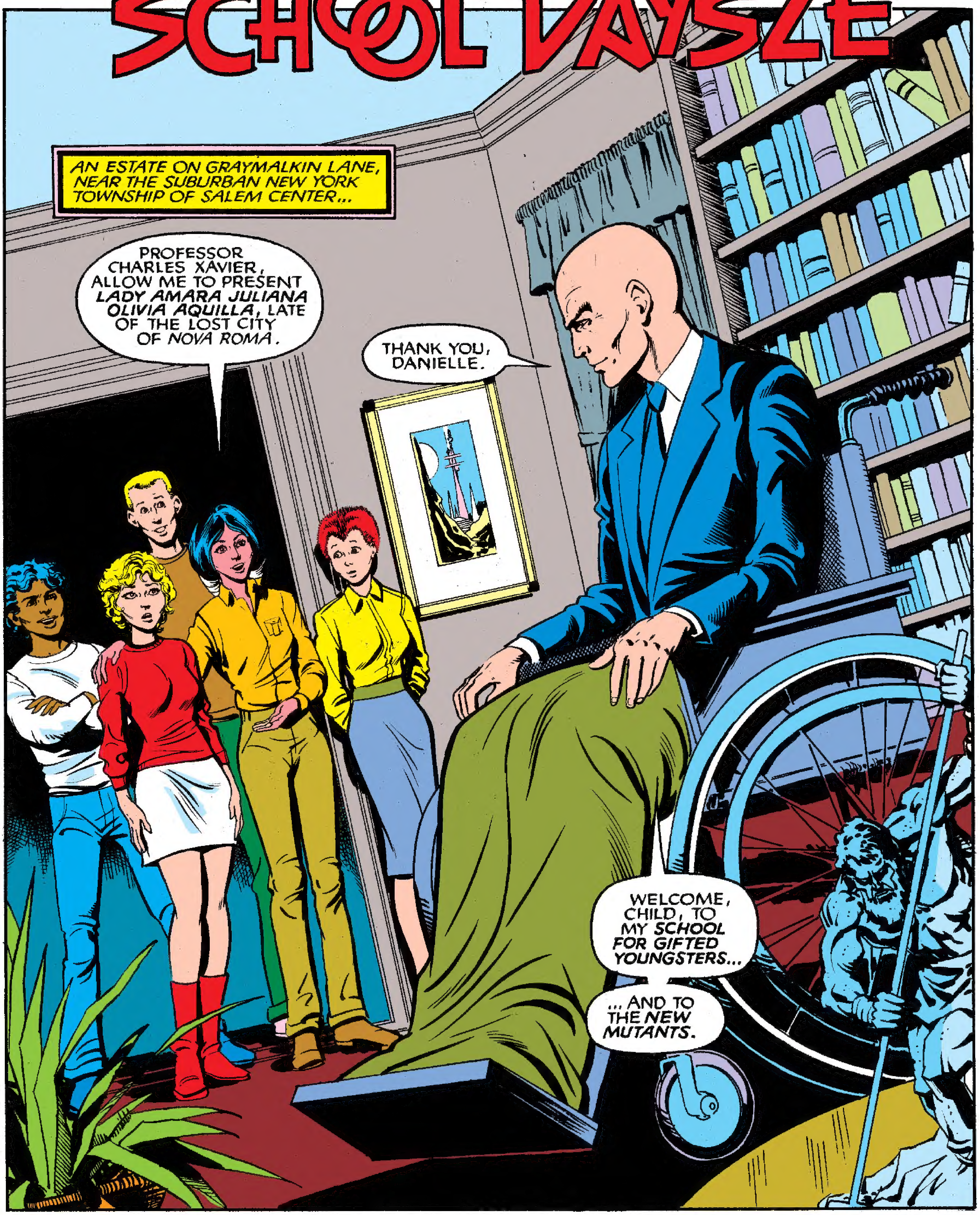
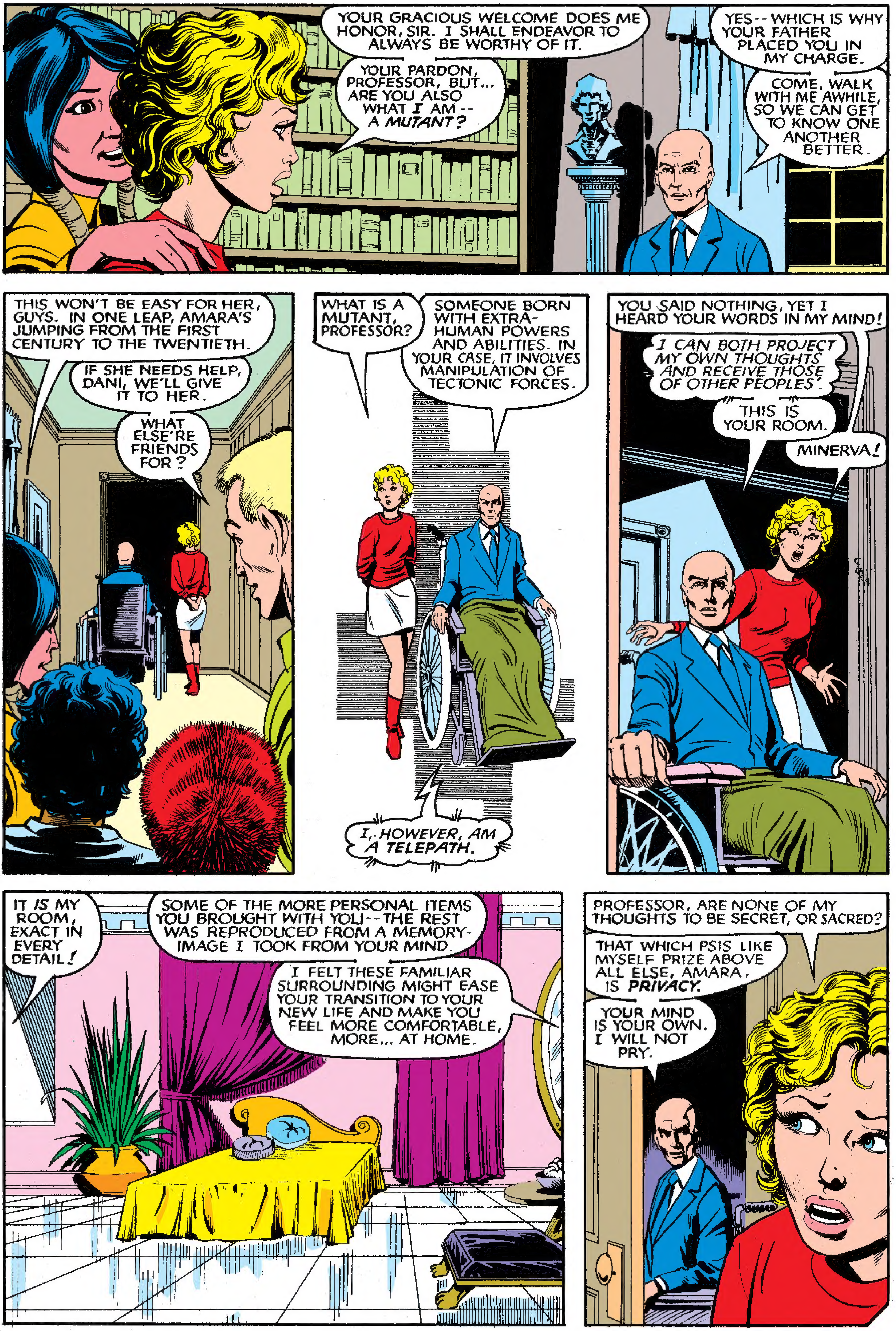
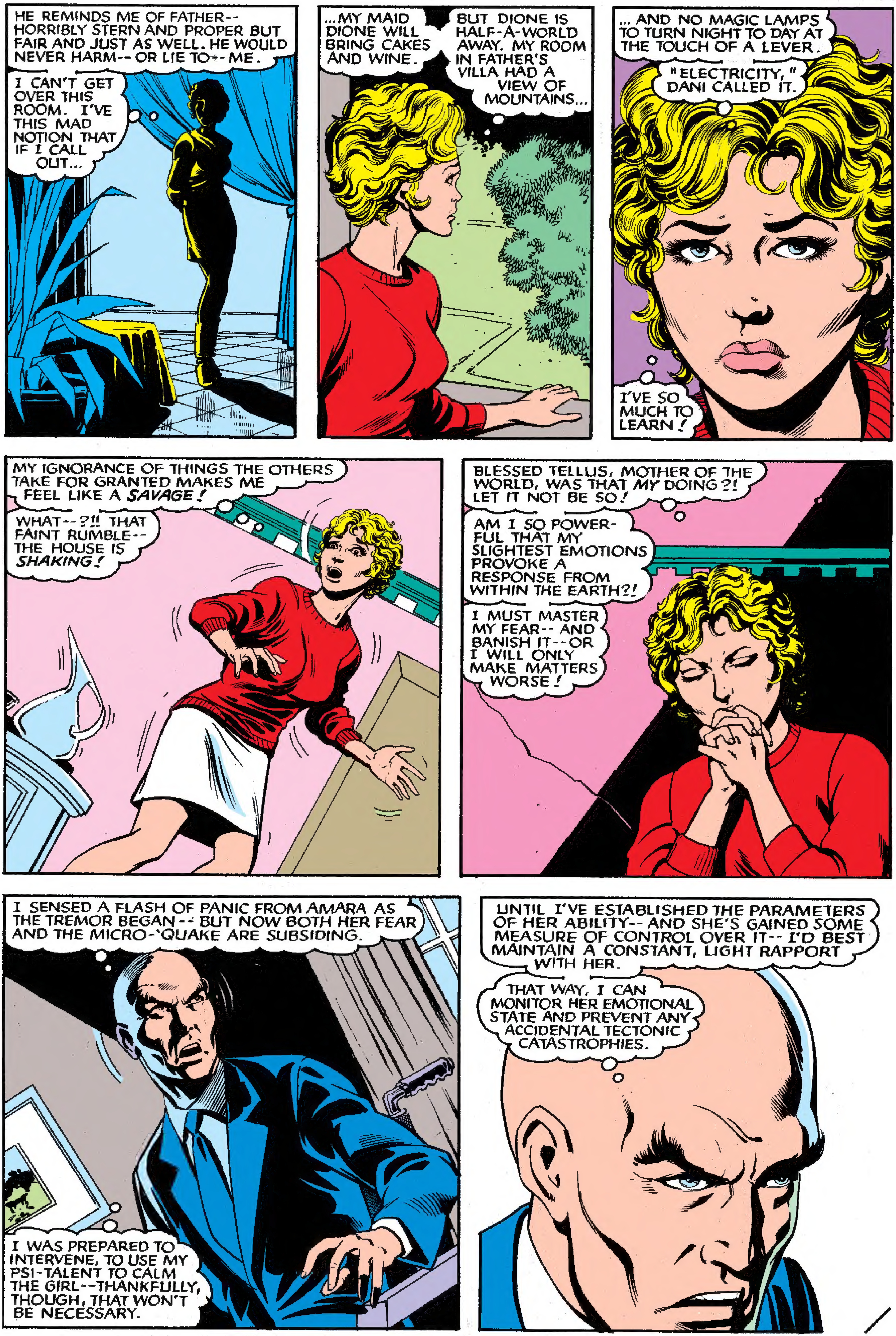
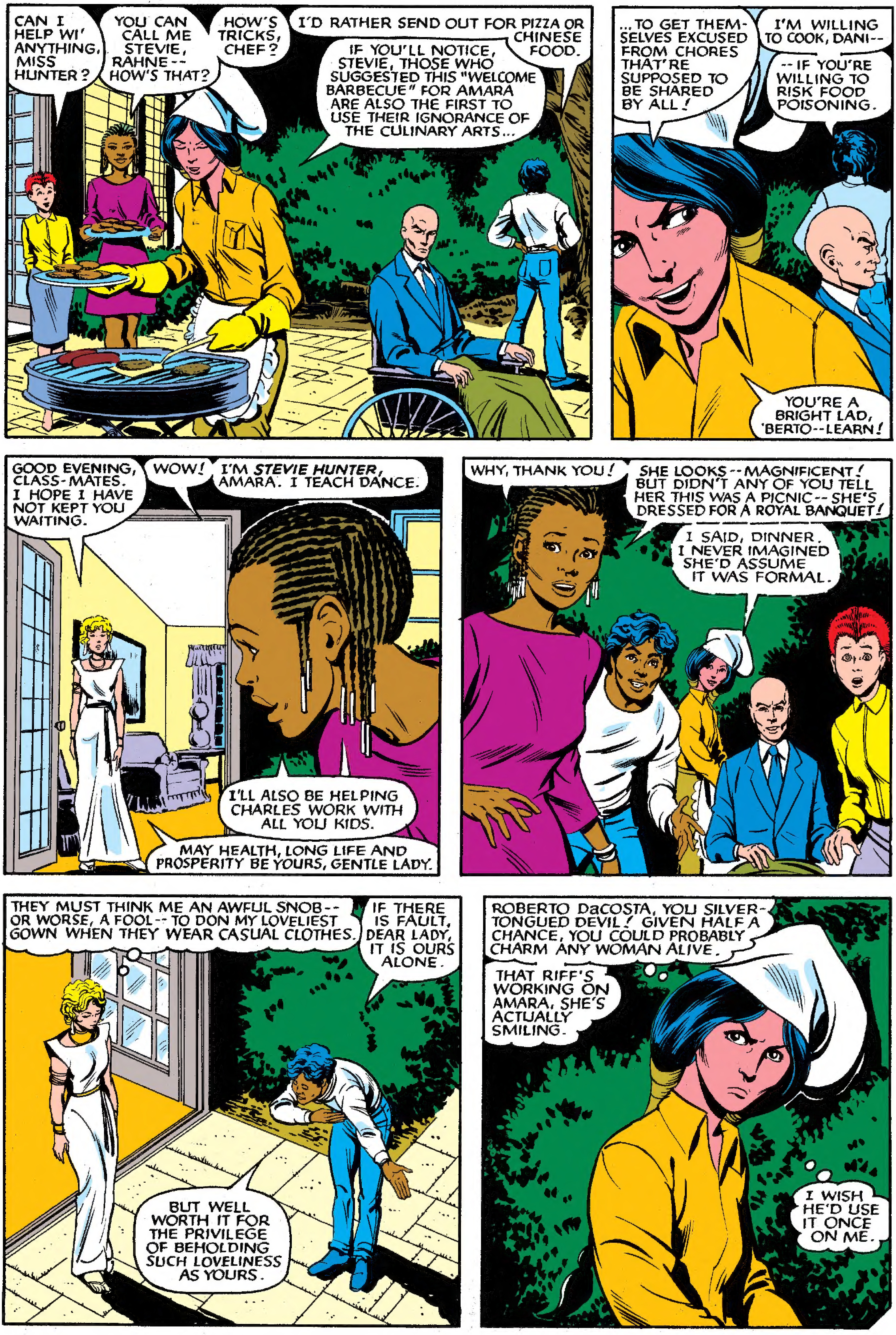
*CREATED BY* CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

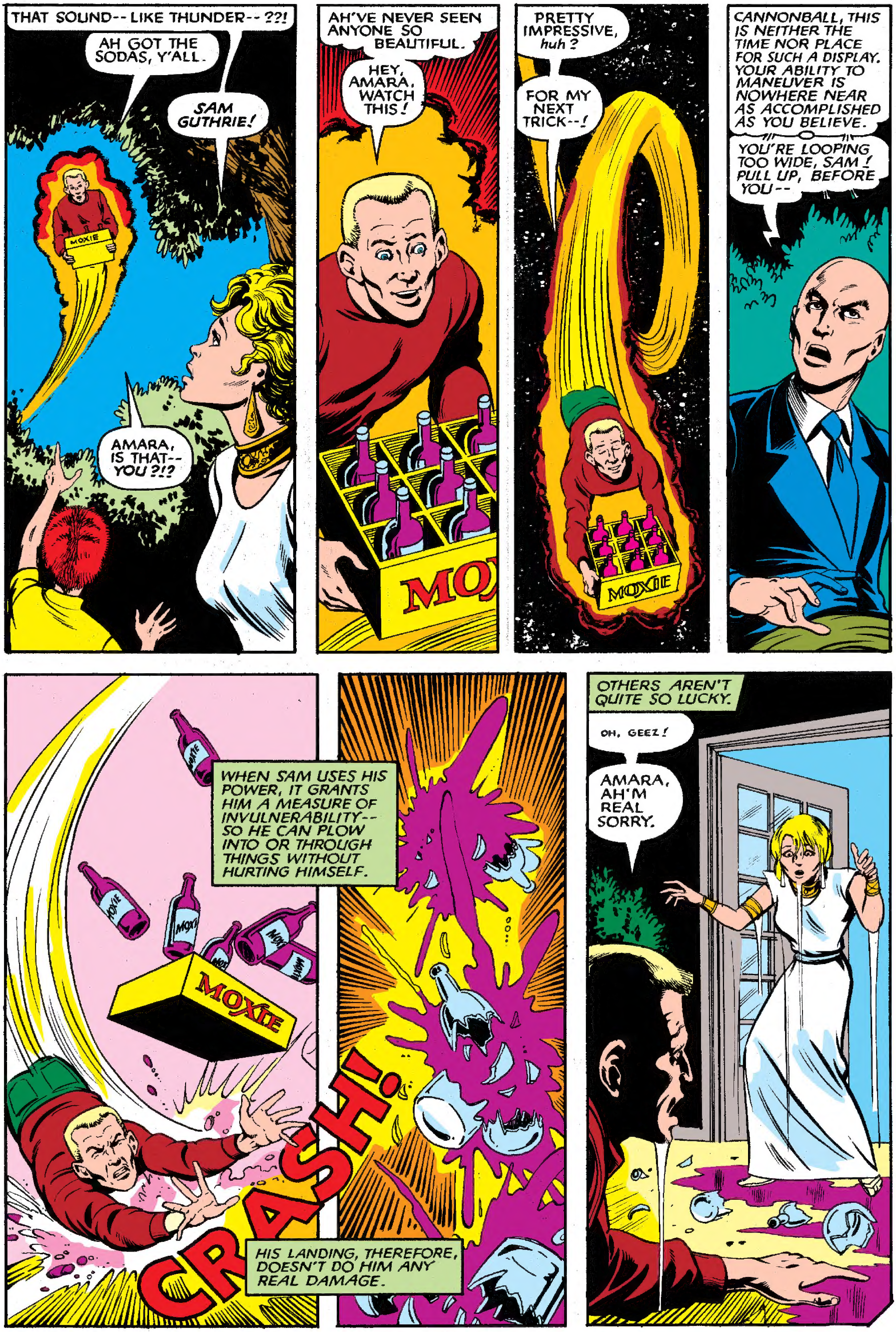
# SCHOOL DAYSZE

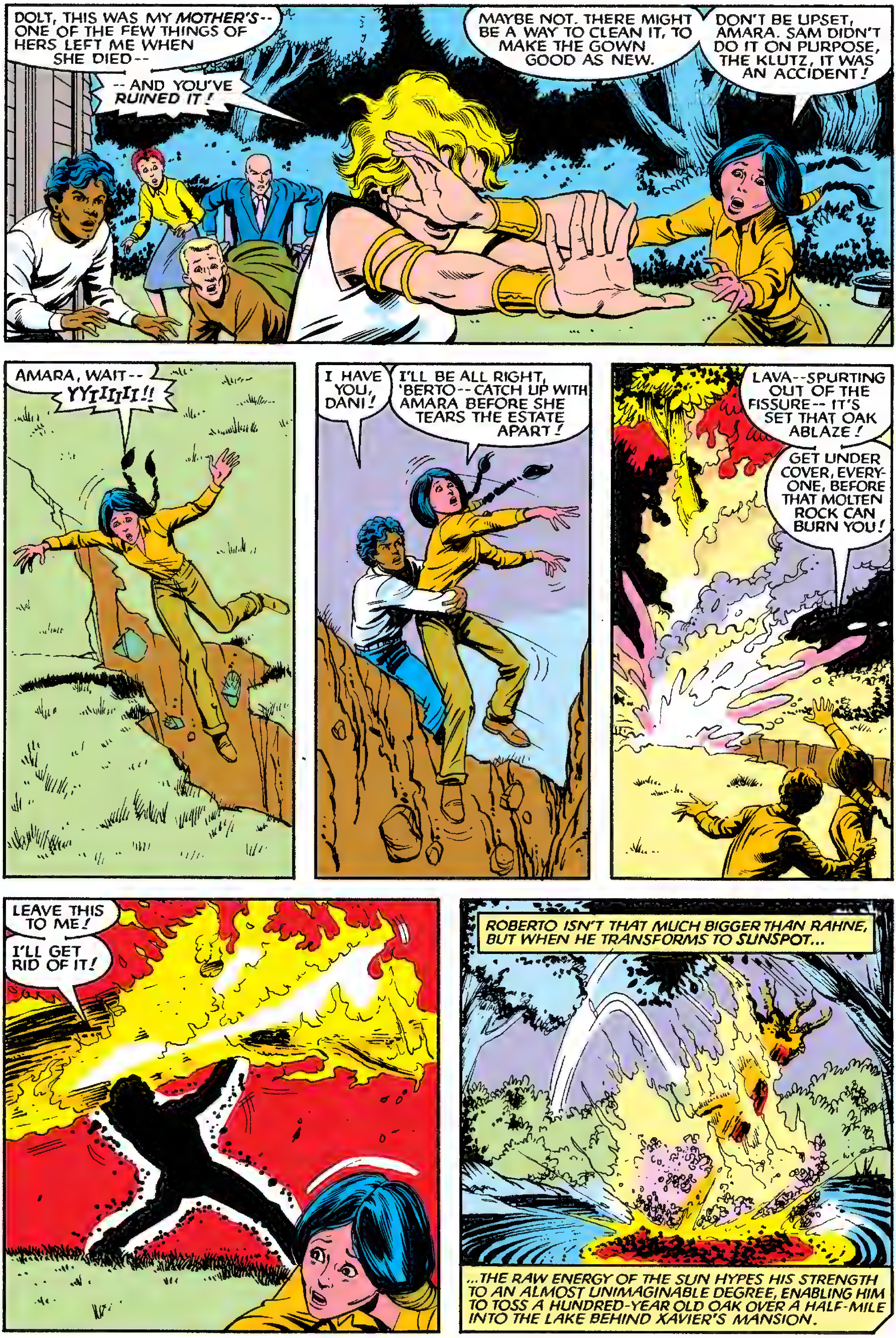

*AN ESTATE ON GRAYMALKIN LANE, NEAR THE SUBURBAN NEW YORK TOWNSHIP OF SALEM CENTER...*
PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT ***LADY AMARA JULIANA OLIVIA AQUILLA***, LATE OF THE LOST CITY OF *NOVA ROMA*.
THANK YOU, DANIELLE.
WELCOME, CHILD, TO MY ***SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...***
...AND TO THE ***NEW MUTANTS***.

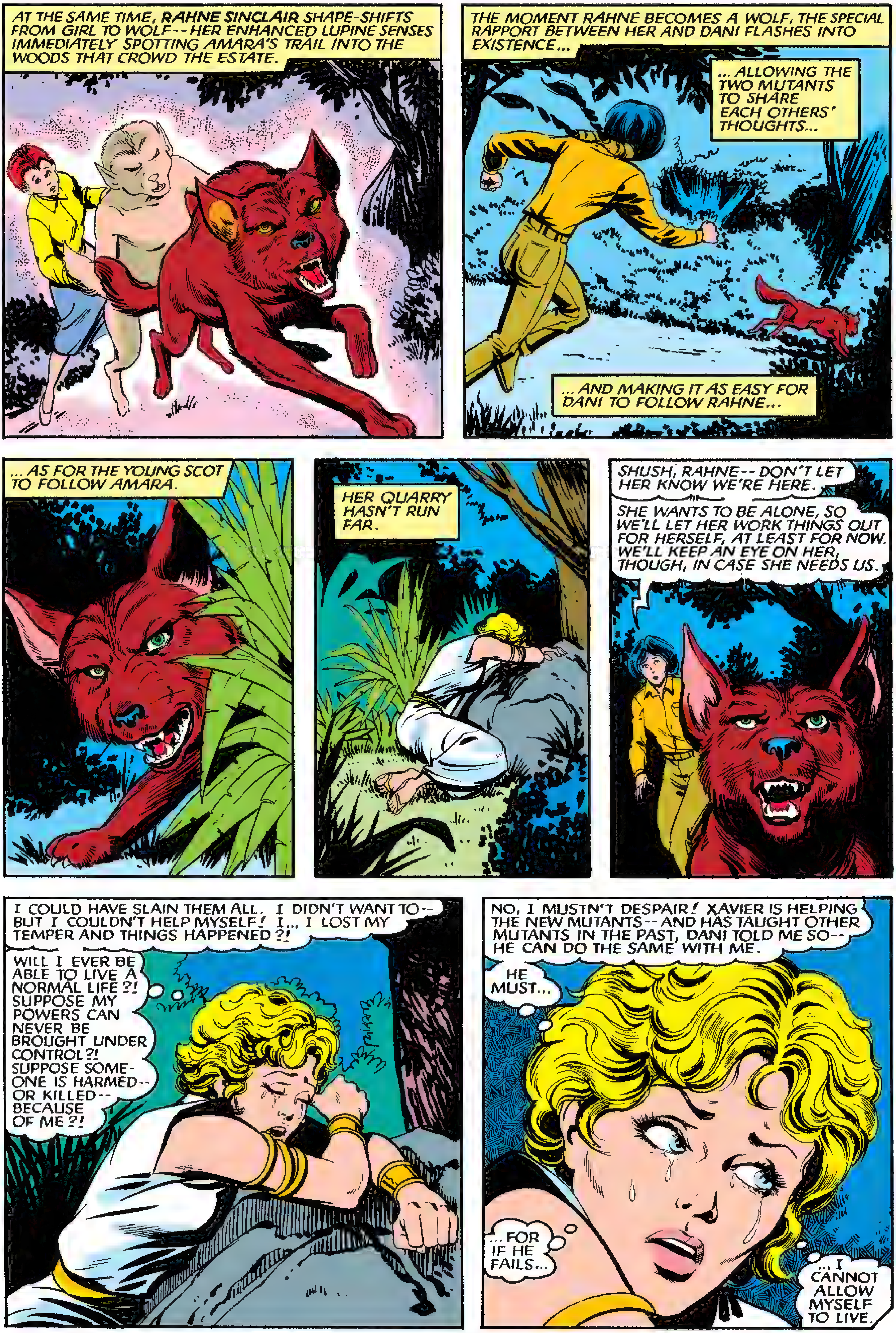

YOUR GRACIOUS WELCOME DOES ME HONOR, SIR. I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO ALWAYS BE WORTHY OF IT.
YOUR PARDON, PROFESSOR, BUT... ARE YOU ALSO WHAT *I* AM -- A *MUTANT?*
YES -- WHICH IS WHY YOUR FATHER PLACED YOU IN MY CHARGE.
COME, WALK WITH ME AWHILE, SO WE CAN GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER BETTER.
THIS WON'T BE EASY FOR HER, GUYS. IN ONE LEAP, AMARA'S JUMPING FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO THE TWENTIETH.
IF SHE NEEDS HELP, DANI, WE'LL GIVE IT TO HER.
WHAT ELSE'RE FRIENDS FOR?
WHAT IS A MUTANT, PROFESSOR?
SOMEONE BORN WITH EXTRA-HUMAN POWERS AND ABILITIES. IN YOUR CASE, IT INVOLVES MANIPULATION OF TECTONIC FORCES.
*I, HOWEVER, AM A TELEPATH.*
YOU SAID NOTHING, YET I HEARD YOUR WORDS IN MY MIND!
*I CAN BOTH PROJECT MY OWN THOUGHTS AND RECEIVE THOSE OF OTHER PEOPLES'.*
THIS IS YOUR ROOM.
MINERVA!
IT *IS* MY ROOM, EXACT IN EVERY DETAIL!
SOME OF THE MORE PERSONAL ITEMS YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU -- THE REST WAS REPRODUCED FROM A MEMORY-IMAGE I TOOK FROM YOUR MIND.
I FELT THESE FAMILIAR SURROUNDING MIGHT EASE YOUR TRANSITION TO YOUR NEW LIFE AND MAKE YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE, MORE... AT HOME.
PROFESSOR, ARE NONE OF MY THOUGHTS TO BE SECRET, OR SACRED?
THAT WHICH PSIS LIKE MYSELF PRIZE ABOVE ALL ELSE, AMARA, IS ***PRIVACY.***
YOUR MIND IS YOUR OWN. I WILL NOT PRY.

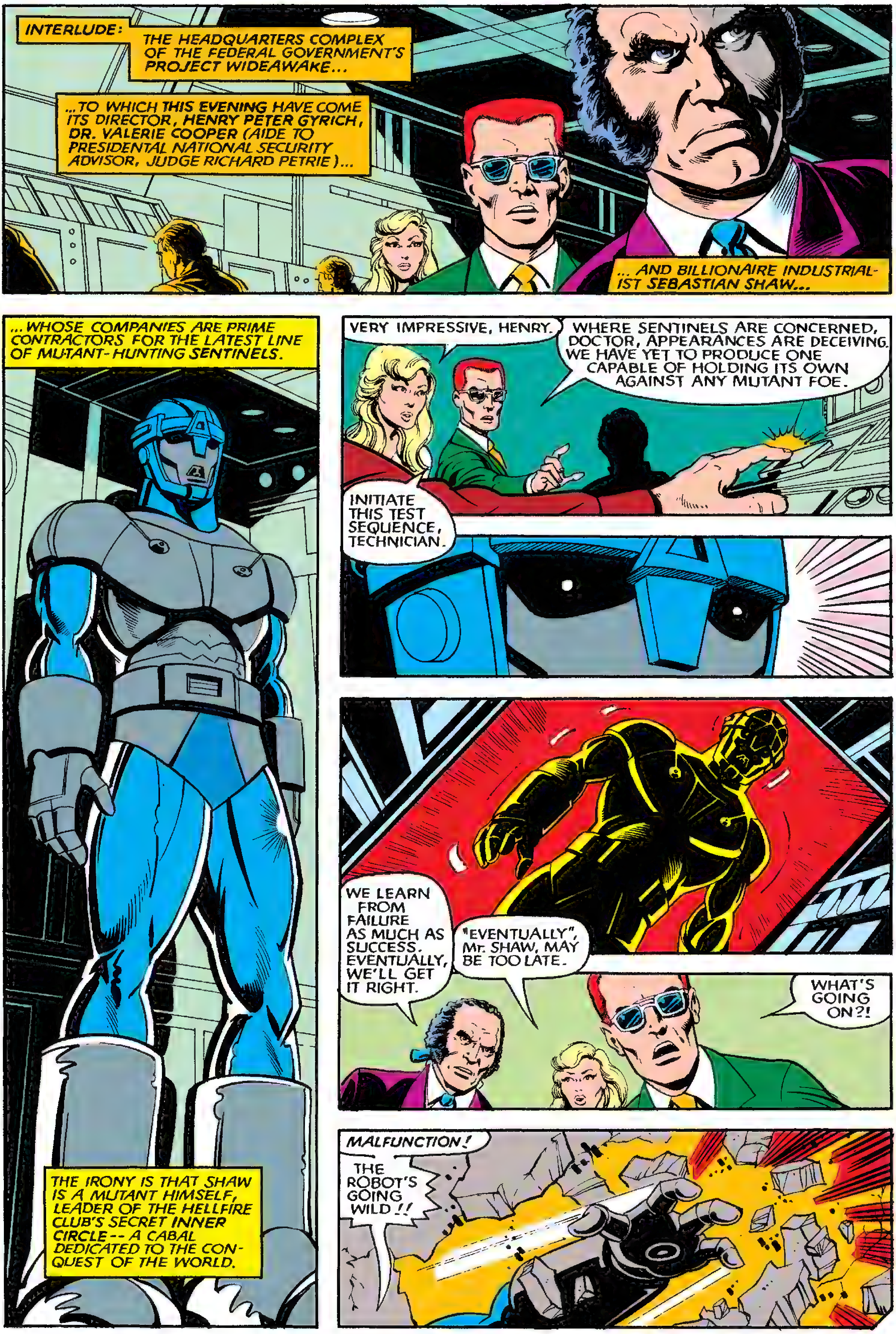

HE REMINDS ME OF FATHER-- HORRIBLY STERN AND PROPER BUT FAIR AND JUST AS WELL. HE WOULD NEVER HARM-- OR LIE TO-- ME.
I CAN'T GET OVER THIS ROOM. I'VE THIS MAD NOTION THAT IF I CALL OUT...
...MY MAID DIONE WILL BRING CAKES AND WINE.
BUT DIONE IS HALF-A-WORLD AWAY. MY ROOM IN FATHER'S VILLA HAD A VIEW OF MOUNTAINS...
... AND NO MAGIC LAMPS TO TURN NIGHT TO DAY AT THE TOUCH OF A LEVER.
"ELECTRICITY," DANI CALLED IT.
I'VE SO MUCH TO LEARN!
MY IGNORANCE OF THINGS THE OTHERS TAKE FOR GRANTED MAKES ME FEEL LIKE A *SAVAGE!*
WHAT--?!! THAT FAINT RUMBLE-- THE HOUSE IS *SHAKING!*
BLESSED TELLUS, MOTHER OF THE WORLD, WAS THAT *MY* DOING?! LET IT NOT BE SO!
AM I SO POWERFUL THAT MY SLIGHTEST EMOTIONS PROVOKE A RESPONSE FROM WITHIN THE EARTH?!
I MUST MASTER MY FEAR-- AND BANISH IT--OR I WILL ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE!
I SENSED A FLASH OF PANIC FROM AMARA AS THE TREMOR BEGAN-- BUT NOW BOTH HER FEAR AND THE MICRO-'QUAKE ARE SUBSIDING.
I WAS PREPARED TO INTERVENE, TO USE MY PSI-TALENT TO CALM THE GIRL--THANKFULLY, THOUGH, THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
UNTIL I'VE ESTABLISHED THE PARAMETERS OF HER ABILITY-- AND SHE'S GAINED SOME MEASURE OF CONTROL OVER IT-- I'D BEST MAINTAIN A CONSTANT, LIGHT RAPPORT WITH HER.
THAT WAY, I CAN MONITOR HER EMOTIONAL STATE AND PREVENT ANY ACCIDENTAL TECTONIC CATASTROPHIES.

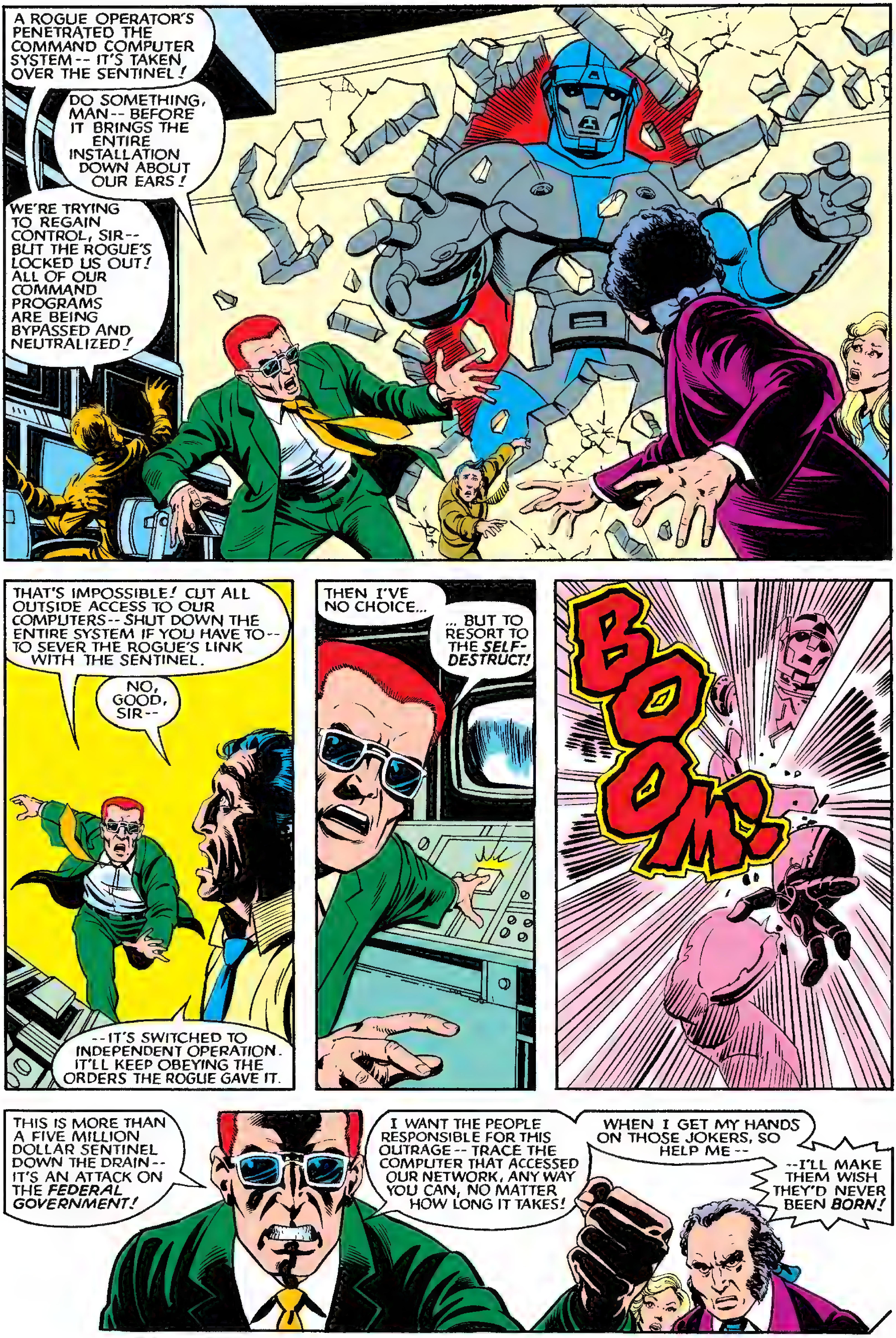

CAN I HELP WI' ANYTHING, MISS HUNTER?
YOU CAN CALL ME STEVIE, RAHNE-- HOW'S THAT?
HOW'S TRICKS, CHEF?
I'D RATHER SEND OUT FOR PIZZA OR CHINESE FOOD.
IF YOU'LL NOTICE, STEVIE, THOSE WHO SUGGESTED THIS "WELCOME BARBECUE" FOR AMARA ARE ALSO THE FIRST TO USE THEIR IGNORANCE OF THE CULINARY ARTS...
...TO GET THEMSELVES EXCUSED FROM CHORES THAT'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SHARED BY ALL!
I'M WILLING TO COOK, DANI--
--IF YOU'RE WILLING TO RISK FOOD POISONING.
YOU'RE A BRIGHT LAD, 'BERTO--LEARN!
GOOD EVENING, CLASS-MATES. I HOPE I HAVE NOT KEPT YOU WAITING.
WOW!
I'M *STEVIE HUNTER*, AMARA. I TEACH DANCE.
I'LL ALSO BE HELPING CHARLES WORK WITH ALL YOU KIDS.
MAY HEALTH, LONG LIFE AND PROSPERITY BE YOURS, GENTLE LADY.
WHY, THANK YOU!
SHE LOOKS--MAGNIFICENT! BUT DIDN'T ANY OF YOU TELL HER THIS WAS A PICNIC--SHE'S DRESSED FOR A ROYAL BANQUET!
I SAID, DINNER. I NEVER IMAGINED SHE'D ASSUME IT WAS FORMAL.
THEY MUST THINK ME AN AWFUL SNOB--OR WORSE, A FOOL--TO DON MY LOVELIEST GOWN WHEN THEY WEAR CASUAL CLOTHES.
IF THERE IS FAULT, DEAR LADY, IT IS OURS ALONE.
BUT WELL WORTH IT FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF BEHOLDING SUCH LOVELINESS AS YOURS.
ROBERTO DaCOSTA, YOU SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL! GIVEN HALF A CHANCE, YOU COULD PROBABLY CHARM ANY WOMAN ALIVE.
THAT RIFF'S WORKING ON AMARA. SHE'S ACTUALLY SMILING.
I WISH HE'D USE IT ONCE ON ME.

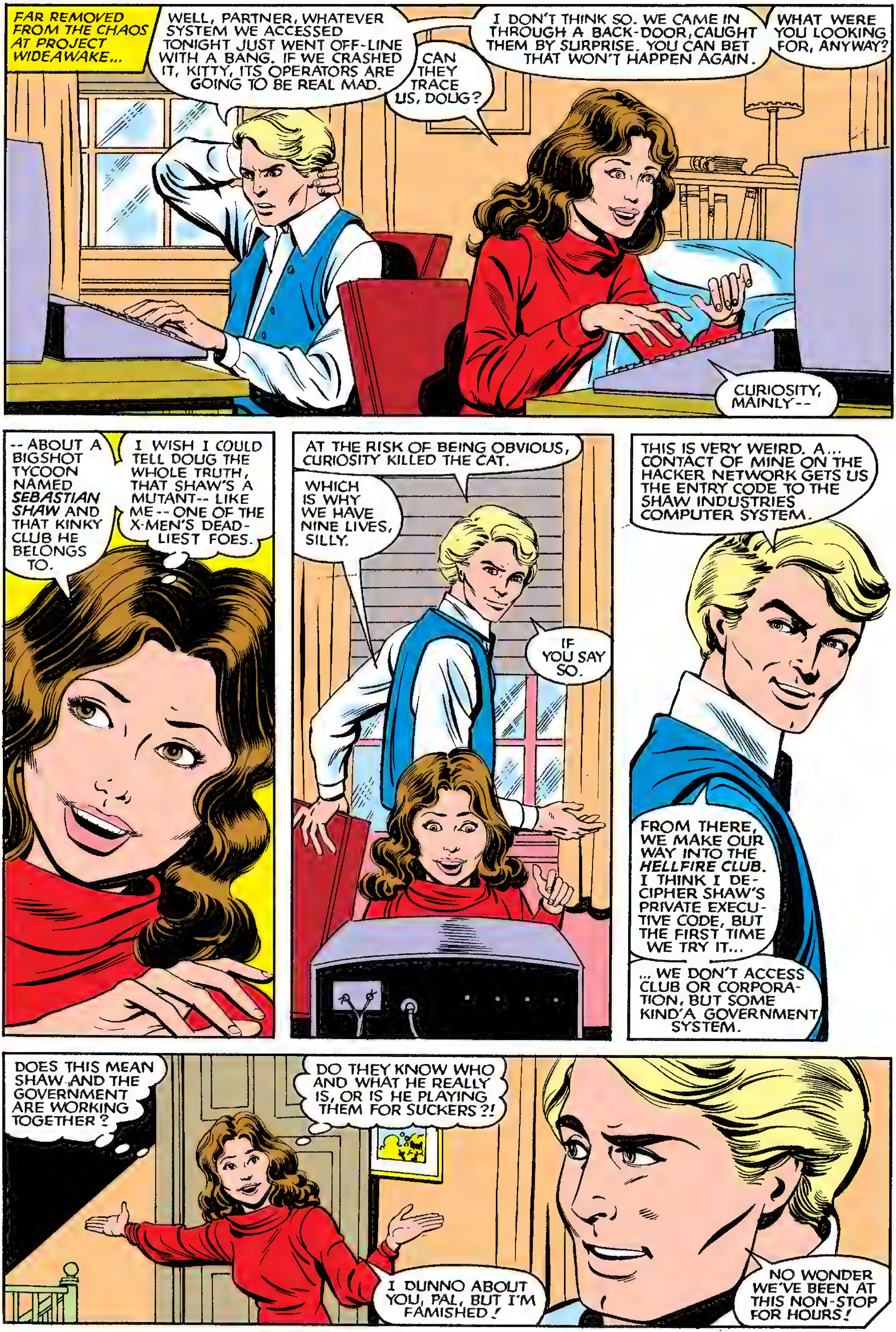

THAT SOUND-- LIKE THUNDER-- ??!
AH GOT THE SODAS, Y'ALL.
SAM GUTHRIE!
MOXIE
AMARA, IS THAT-- YOU?!?
AH'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE SO BEAUTIFUL.
HEY, AMARA, WATCH THIS!
MOX
PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, huh?
FOR MY NEXT TRICK--!
MOXIE
CANNONBALL, THIS IS NEITHER THE TIME NOR PLACE FOR SUCH A DISPLAY. YOUR ABILITY TO MANEUVER IS NOWHERE NEAR AS ACCOMPLISHED AS YOU BELIEVE.
YOU'RE LOOPING TOO WIDE, SAM! PULL UP, BEFORE YOU--
WHEN SAM USES HIS POWER, IT GRANTS HIM A MEASURE OF INVULNERABILITY-- SO HE CAN PLOW INTO OR THROUGH THINGS WITHOUT HURTING HIMSELF.
MOXIE
CRASH!
HIS LANDING, THEREFORE, DOESN'T DO HIM ANY REAL DAMAGE.
OTHERS AREN'T QUITE SO LUCKY.
OH, GEEZ!
AMARA, AH'M REAL SORRY.

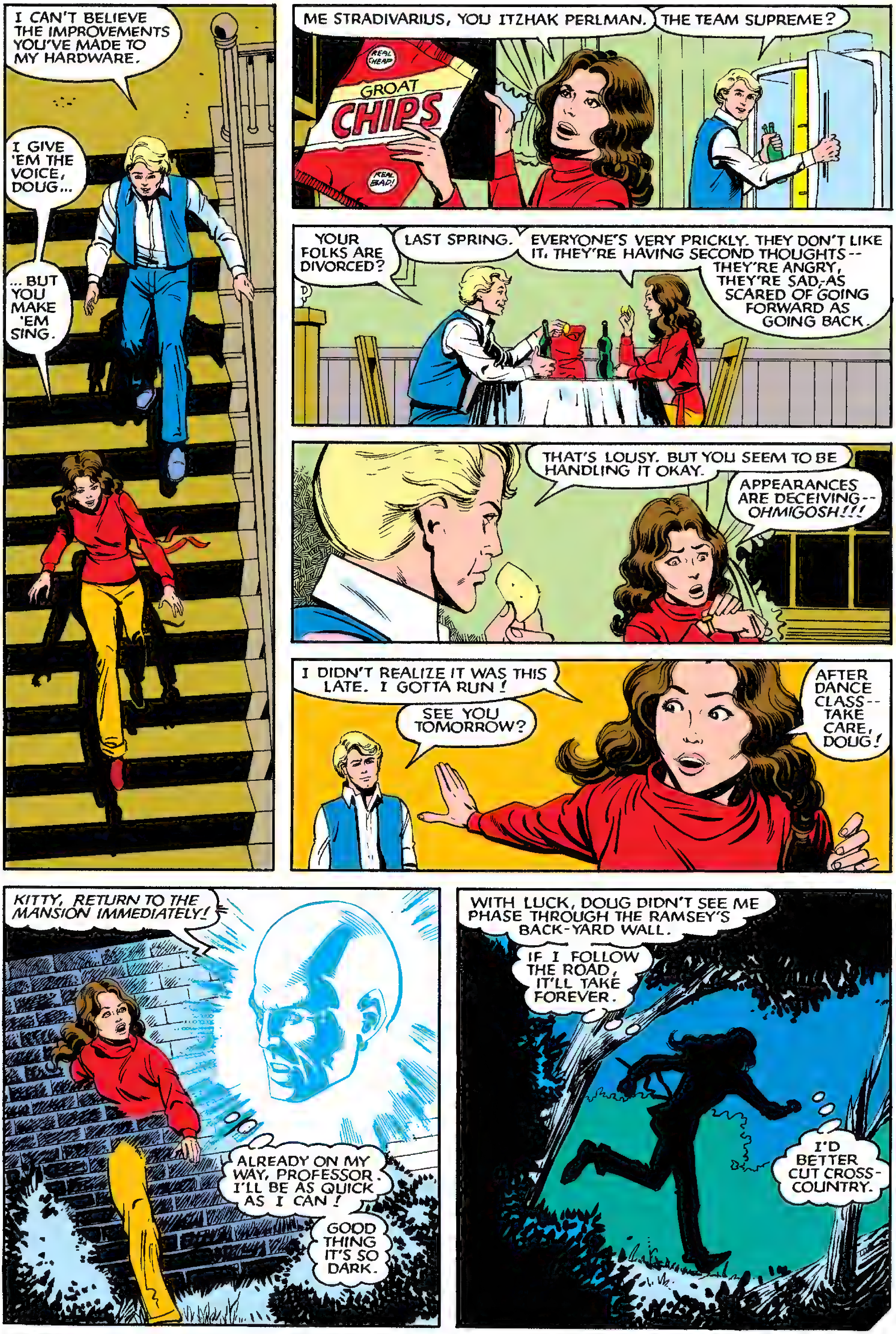

DOLT, THIS WAS MY *MOTHER'S*-- ONE OF THE FEW THINGS OF HERS LEFT ME WHEN SHE DIED--
-- AND YOU'VE *RUINED IT!*
MAYBE NOT. THERE MIGHT BE A WAY TO CLEAN IT, TO MAKE THE GOWN GOOD AS NEW.
DON'T BE UPSET, AMARA. SAM DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE, THE KLUTZ, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
AMARA, WAIT-- *YYIIIII!!*
I HAVE YOU, DANI!
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT, 'BERTO--CATCH UP WITH AMARA BEFORE SHE TEARS THE ESTATE APART!
LAVA--SPURTING OUT OF THE FISSURE-- IT'S SET THAT OAK ABLAZE!
GET UNDER COVER, EVERYONE, BEFORE THAT MOLTEN ROCK CAN BURN YOU!
LEAVE THIS TO ME!
I'LL GET RID OF IT!
*ROBERTO ISN'T THAT MUCH BIGGER THAN RAHNE, BUT WHEN HE TRANSFORMS TO SUNSPOT...*
*...THE RAW ENERGY OF THE SUN HYPES HIS STRENGTH TO AN ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE DEGREE, ENABLING HIM TO TOSS A HUNDRED-YEAR OLD OAK OVER A HALF-MILE INTO THE LAKE BEHIND XAVIER'S MANSION.*

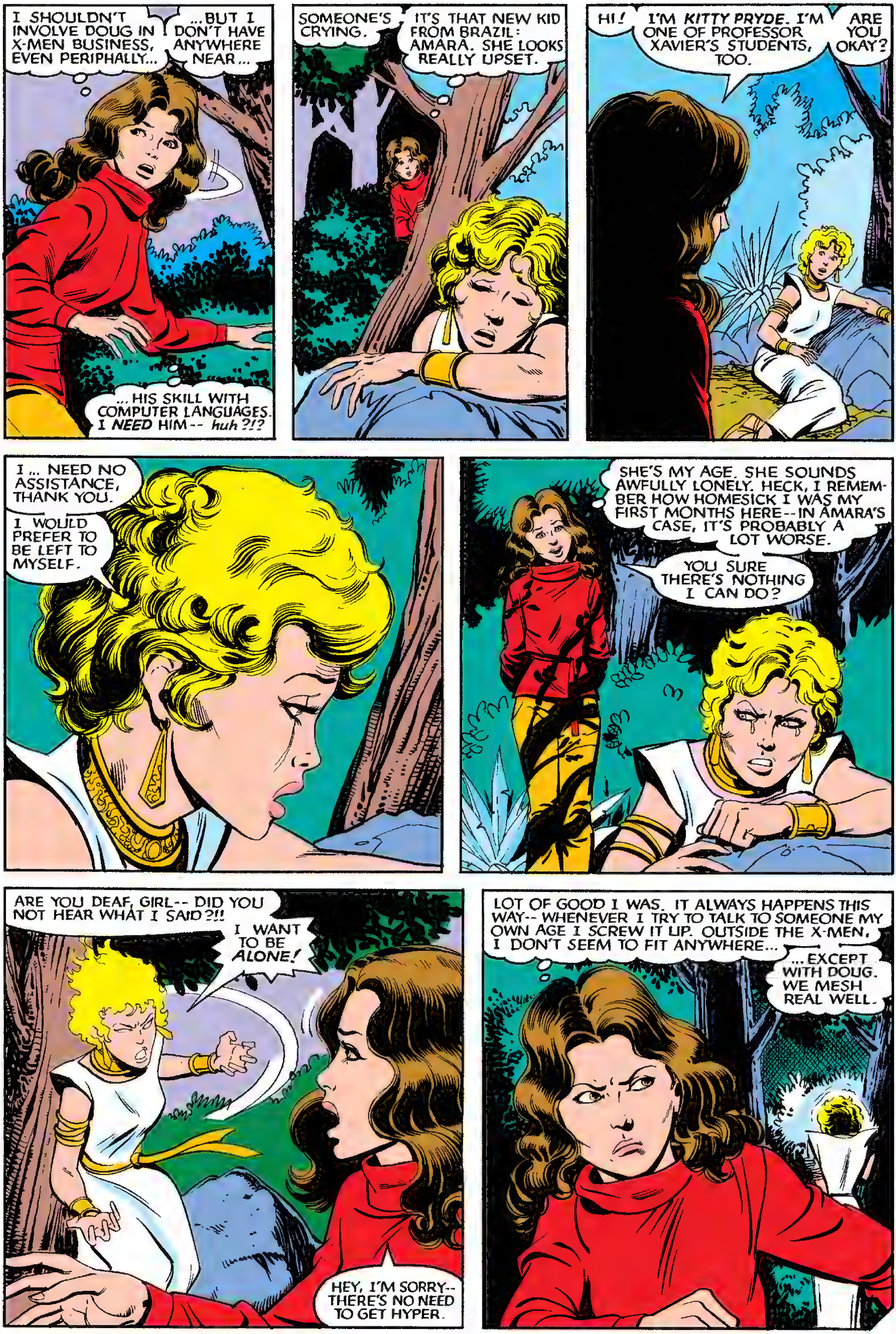

AT THE SAME TIME, RAHNE SINCLAIR SHAPE-SHIFTS FROM GIRL TO WOLF-- HER ENHANCED LUPINE SENSES IMMEDIATELY SPOTTING AMARA'S TRAIL INTO THE WOODS THAT CROWD THE ESTATE.
THE MOMENT RAHNE BECOMES A WOLF, THE SPECIAL RAPPORT BETWEEN HER AND DANI FLASHES INTO EXISTENCE...
...ALLOWING THE TWO MUTANTS TO SHARE EACH OTHERS' THOUGHTS...
...AND MAKING IT AS EASY FOR DANI TO FOLLOW RAHNE...
...AS FOR THE YOUNG SCOT TO FOLLOW AMARA.
HER QUARRY HASN'T RUN FAR.
SHUSH, RAHNE-- DON'T LET HER KNOW WE'RE HERE.
SHE WANTS TO BE ALONE, SO WE'LL LET HER WORK THINGS OUT FOR HERSELF, AT LEAST FOR NOW. WE'LL KEEP AN EYE ON HER, THOUGH, IN CASE SHE NEEDS US.
I COULD HAVE SLAIN THEM ALL. I DIDN'T WANT TO-- BUT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF! I... I LOST MY TEMPER AND THINGS HAPPENED?!
WILL I EVER BE ABLE TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE?! SUPPOSE MY POWERS CAN NEVER BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL?! SUPPOSE SOMEONE IS HARMED-- OR KILLED-- BECAUSE OF ME?!
NO, I MUSTN'T DESPAIR! XAVIER IS HELPING THE NEW MUTANTS-- AND HAS TAUGHT OTHER MUTANTS IN THE PAST, DANI TOLD ME SO-- HE CAN DO THE SAME WITH ME.
HE MUST...
...FOR IF HE FAILS...
...I CANNOT ALLOW MYSELF TO LIVE.

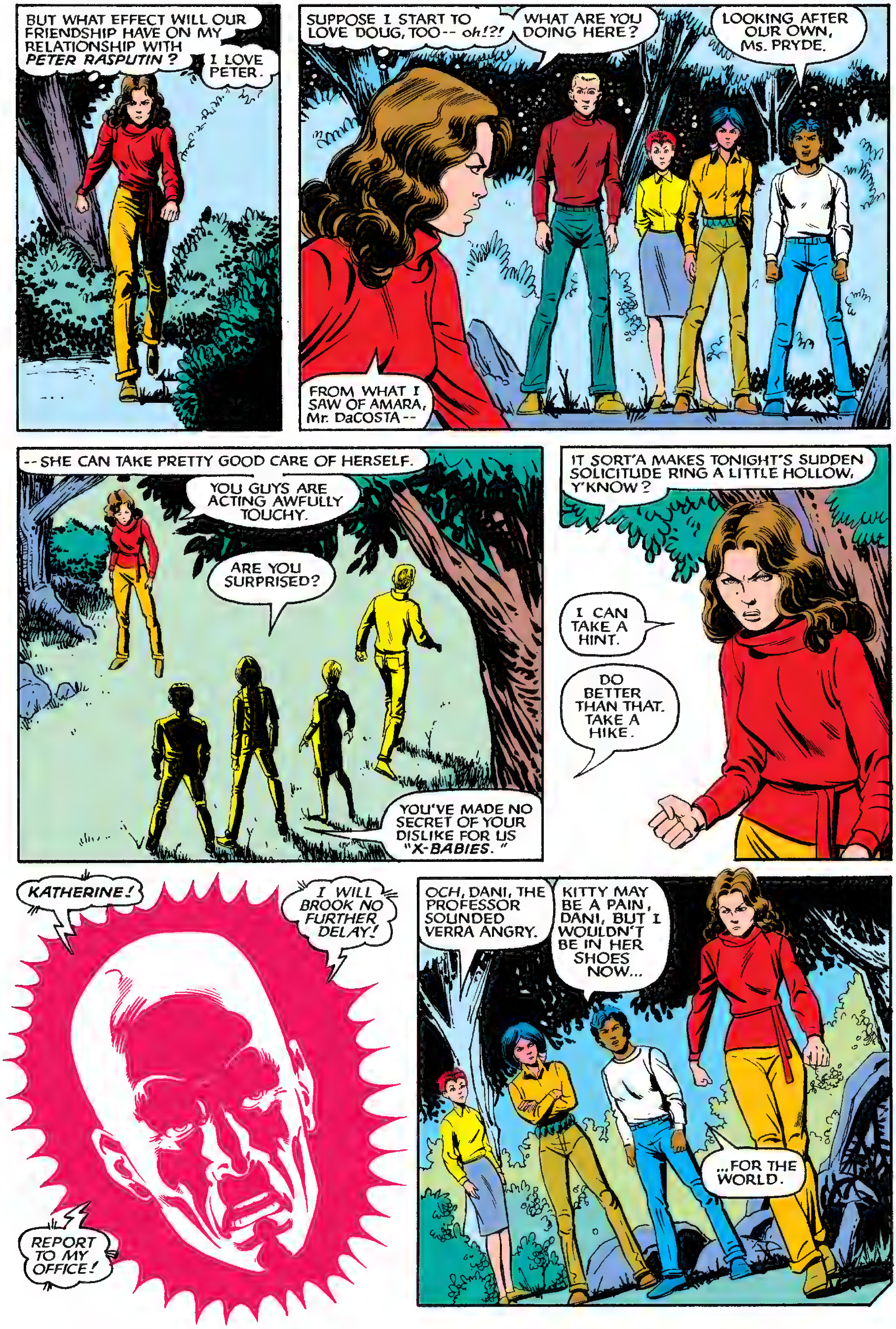

INTERLUDE:
THE HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROJECT WIDEAWAKE...
...TO WHICH THIS EVENING HAVE COME ITS DIRECTOR, HENRY PETER GYRICH, DR. VALERIE COOPER (AIDE TO PRESIDENTIAL NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR, JUDGE RICHARD PETRIE)...
...AND BILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST SEBASTIAN SHAW...
...WHOSE COMPANIES ARE PRIME CONTRACTORS FOR THE LATEST LINE OF MUTANT-HUNTING SENTINELS.
THE IRONY IS THAT SHAW IS A MUTANT HIMSELF, LEADER OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S SECRET INNER CIRCLE -- A CABAL DEDICATED TO THE CONQUEST OF THE WORLD.
VERY IMPRESSIVE, HENRY.
WHERE SENTINELS ARE CONCERNED, DOCTOR, APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING. WE HAVE YET TO PRODUCE ONE CAPABLE OF HOLDING ITS OWN AGAINST ANY MUTANT FOE.
INITIATE THIS TEST SEQUENCE, TECHNICIAN.
WE LEARN FROM FAILURE AS MUCH AS SUCCESS. EVENTUALLY, WE'LL GET IT RIGHT.
"EVENTUALLY", MR. SHAW, MAY BE TOO LATE.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
MALFUNCTION!
THE ROBOT'S GOING WILD!!

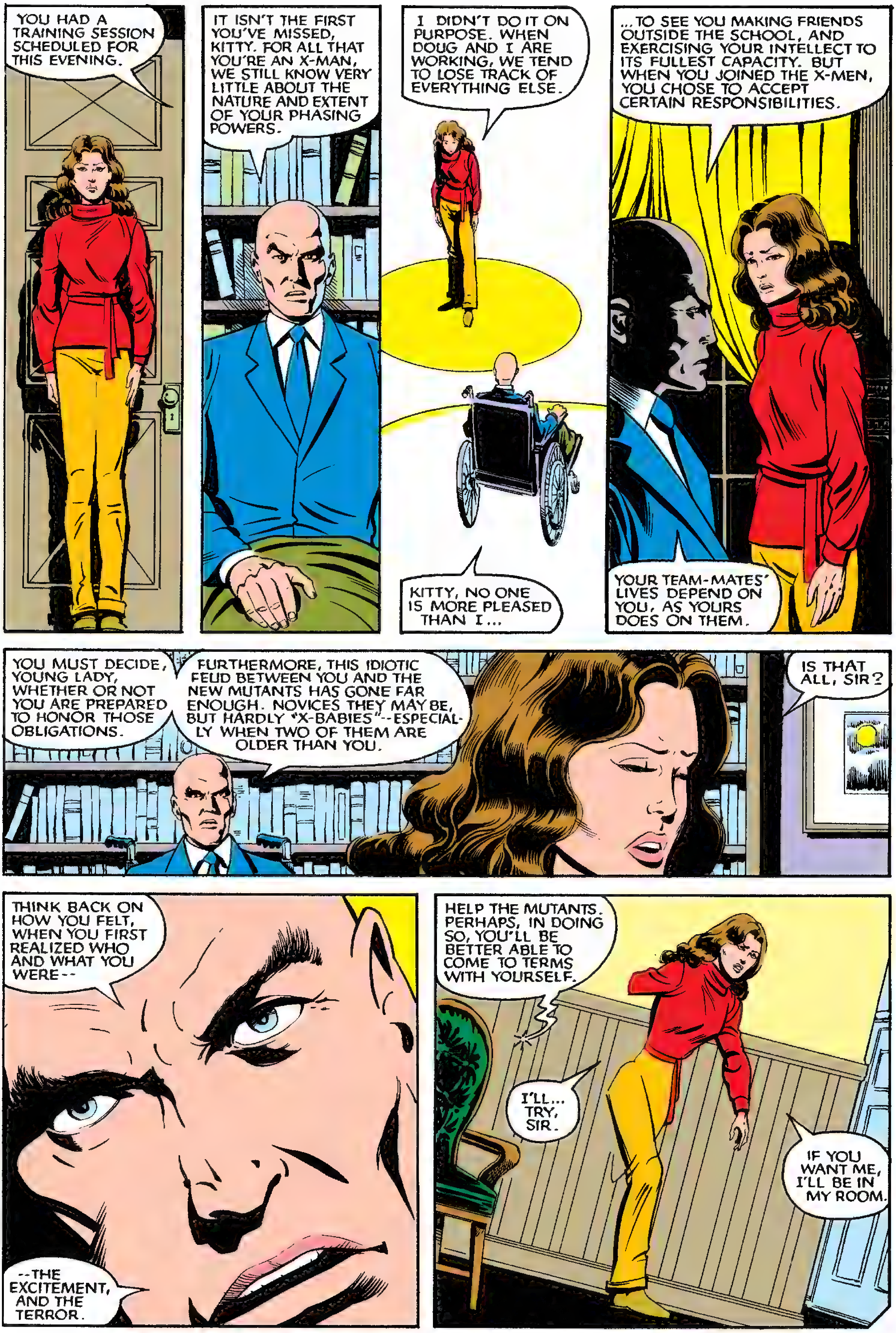

A ROGUE OPERATOR'S PENETRATED THE COMMAND COMPUTER SYSTEM -- IT'S TAKEN OVER THE SENTINEL!
DO SOMETHING, MAN -- BEFORE IT BRINGS THE ENTIRE INSTALLATION DOWN ABOUT OUR EARS!
WE'RE TRYING TO REGAIN CONTROL, SIR -- BUT THE ROGUE'S LOCKED US OUT! ALL OF OUR COMMAND PROGRAMS ARE BEING BYPASSED AND NEUTRALIZED!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! CUT ALL OUTSIDE ACCESS TO OUR COMPUTERS -- SHUT DOWN THE ENTIRE SYSTEM IF YOU HAVE TO -- TO SEVER THE ROGUE'S LINK WITH THE SENTINEL.
NO, GOOD, SIR --
-- IT'S SWITCHED TO INDEPENDENT OPERATION. IT'LL KEEP OBEYING THE ORDERS THE ROGUE GAVE IT.
THEN I'VE NO CHOICE...
... BUT TO RESORT TO THE SELF-DESTRUCT!
BOOM!
THIS IS MORE THAN A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR SENTINEL DOWN THE DRAIN -- IT'S AN ATTACK ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT!
I WANT THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS OUTRAGE -- TRACE THE COMPUTER THAT ACCESSED OUR NETWORK, ANY WAY YOU CAN, NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES!
WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON THOSE JOKERS, SO HELP ME --
--I'LL MAKE THEM WISH THEY'D NEVER BEEN BORN!

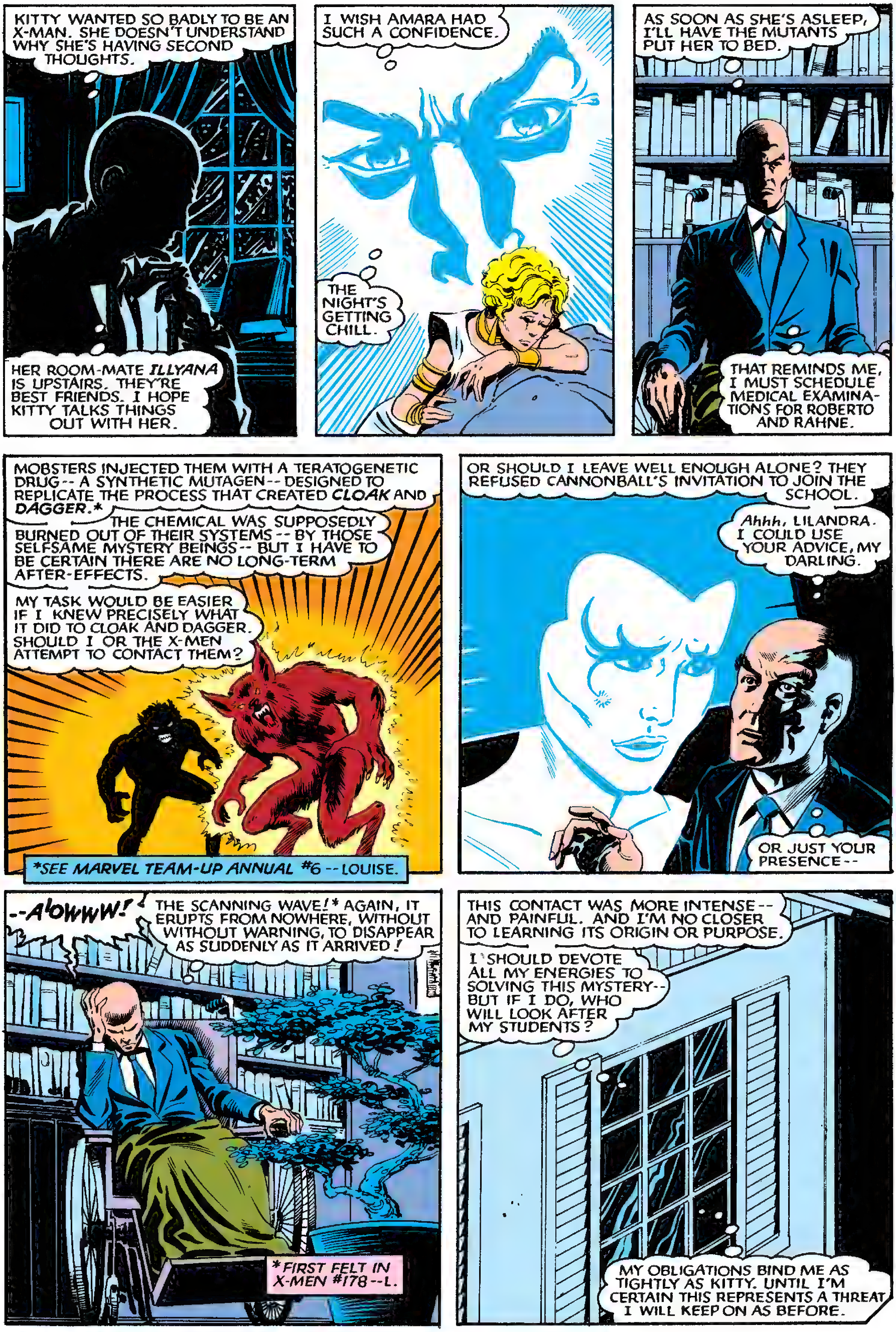

FAR REMOVED FROM THE CHAOS AT PROJECT WIDEAWAKE...
WELL, PARTNER, WHATEVER SYSTEM WE ACCESSED TONIGHT JUST WENT OFF-LINE WITH A BANG. IF WE CRASHED IT, KITTY, ITS OPERATORS ARE GOING TO BE REAL MAD.
CAN THEY TRACE US, DOUG?
I DON'T THINK SO. WE CAME IN THROUGH A BACK-DOOR, CAUGHT THEM BY SURPRISE. YOU CAN BET THAT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR, ANYWAY?
CURIOSITY, MAINLY--
--ABOUT A BIGSHOT TYCOON NAMED SEBASTIAN SHAW AND THAT KINKY CLUB HE BELONGS TO.
I WISH I COULD TELL DOUG THE WHOLE TRUTH, THAT SHAW'S A MUTANT-- LIKE ME--ONE OF THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST FOES.
AT THE RISK OF BEING OBVIOUS, CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT.
WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE NINE LIVES, SILLY.
IF YOU SAY SO.
THIS IS VERY WEIRD. A... CONTACT OF MINE ON THE HACKER NETWORK GETS US THE ENTRY CODE TO THE SHAW INDUSTRIES COMPUTER SYSTEM.
FROM THERE, WE MAKE OUR WAY INTO THE HELLFIRE CLUB. I THINK I DECIPHER SHAW'S PRIVATE EXECUTIVE CODE, BUT THE FIRST TIME WE TRY IT...
...WE DON'T ACCESS CLUB OR CORPORATION, BUT SOME KIND'A GOVERNMENT SYSTEM.
DOES THIS MEAN SHAW AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE WORKING TOGETHER?
DO THEY KNOW WHO AND WHAT HE REALLY IS, OR IS HE PLAYING THEM FOR SUCKERS?!
I DUNNO ABOUT YOU, PAL, BUT I'M FAMISHED!
NO WONDER WE'VE BEEN AT THIS NON-STOP FOR HOURS!

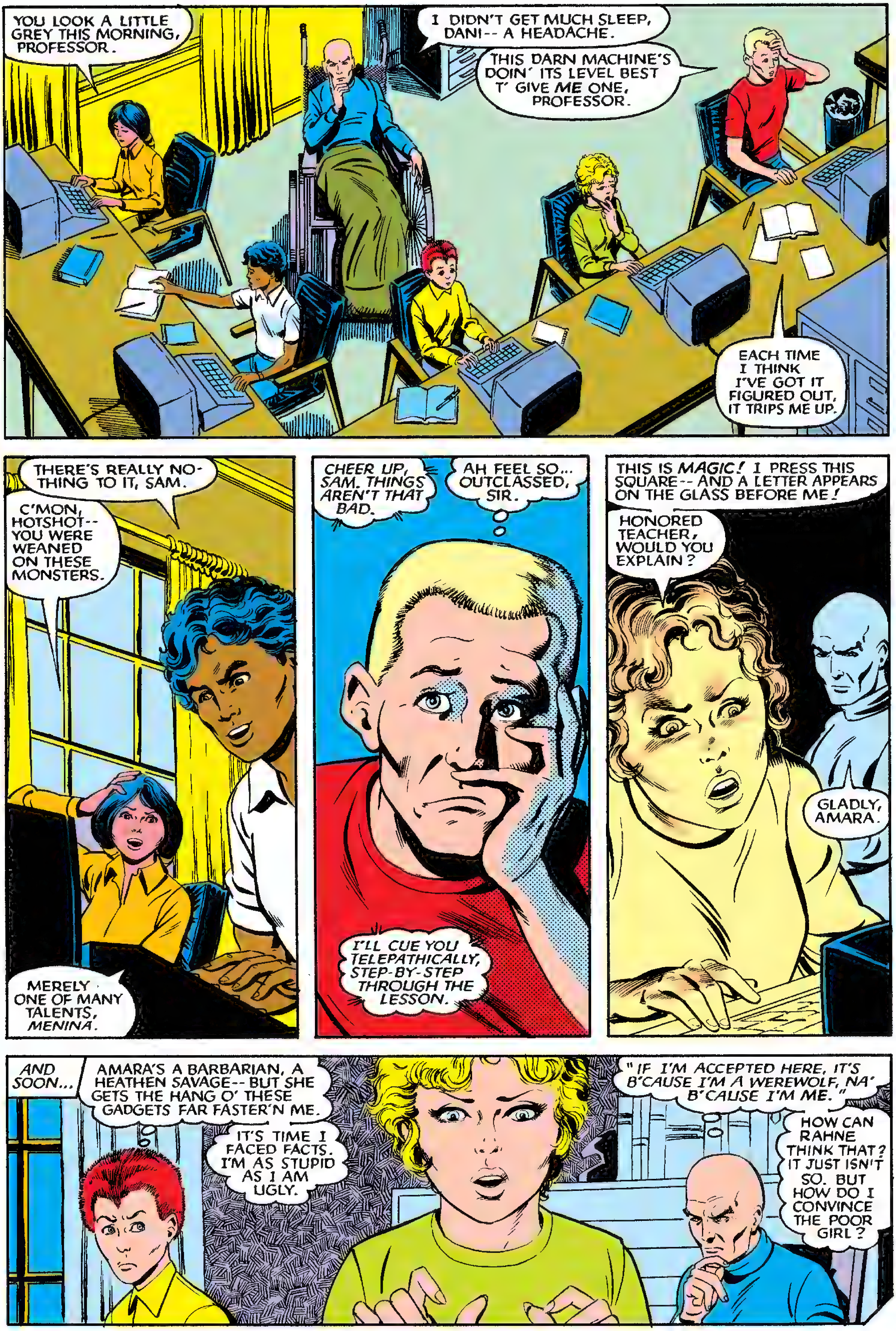

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE IMPROVEMENTS YOU'VE MADE TO MY HARDWARE.
I GIVE 'EM THE VOICE, DOUG...
...BUT YOU MAKE 'EM SING.
ME STRADIVARIUS, YOU ITZHAK PERLMAN.
THE TEAM SUPREME?
REAL CHEAP
GROAT CHIPS
REAL BAD!
YOUR FOLKS ARE DIVORCED?
LAST SPRING.
EVERYONE'S VERY PRICKLY. THEY DON'T LIKE IT. THEY'RE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS-- THEY'RE ANGRY, THEY'RE SAD, AS SCARED OF GOING FORWARD AS GOING BACK.
THAT'S LOUSY. BUT YOU SEEM TO BE HANDLING IT OKAY.
APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING-- OHMIGOSH!!!
I DIDN'T REALIZE IT WAS THIS LATE. I GOTTA RUN!
SEE YOU TOMORROW?
AFTER DANCE CLASS-- TAKE CARE, DOUG!
KITTY, RETURN TO THE MANSION IMMEDIATELY!
ALREADY ON MY WAY, PROFESSOR. I'LL BE AS QUICK AS I CAN!
GOOD THING IT'S SO DARK.
WITH LUCK, DOUG DIDN'T SEE ME PHASE THROUGH THE RAMSEY'S BACK-YARD WALL.
IF I FOLLOW THE ROAD, IT'LL TAKE FOREVER.
I'D BETTER CUT CROSS-COUNTRY.

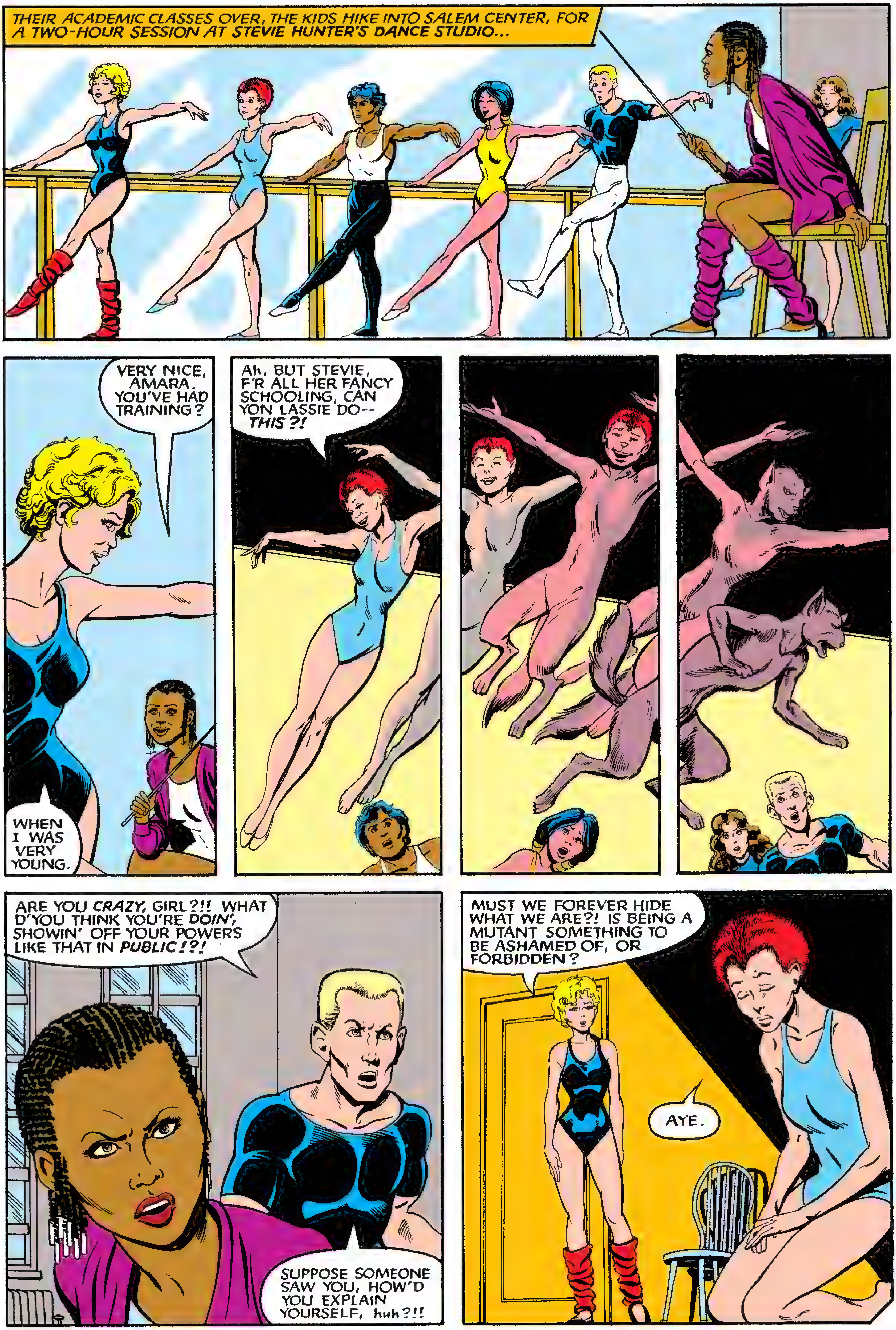

I SHOULDN'T INVOLVE DOUG IN X-MEN BUSINESS, EVEN PERIPHALLY...
...BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE NEAR...
...HIS SKILL WITH COMPUTER LANGUAGES. I *NEED* HIM-- *huh ?!?*
SOMEONE'S CRYING.
IT'S THAT NEW KID FROM BRAZIL: AMARA. SHE LOOKS REALLY UPSET.
HI!
I'M *KITTY PRYDE*. I'M ONE OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S STUDENTS, TOO.
ARE YOU OKAY?
I... NEED NO ASSISTANCE, THANK YOU.
I WOULD PREFER TO BE LEFT TO MYSELF.
SHE'S MY AGE. SHE SOUNDS AWFULLY LONELY. HECK, I REMEMBER HOW HOMESICK I WAS MY FIRST MONTHS HERE--IN AMARA'S CASE, IT'S PROBABLY A LOT WORSE.
YOU SURE THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO?
ARE YOU DEAF, GIRL-- DID YOU NOT HEAR WHAT I SAID?!!
I WANT TO BE *ALONE!*
HEY, I'M SORRY-- THERE'S NO NEED TO GET HYPER.
LOT OF GOOD I WAS. IT ALWAYS HAPPENS THIS WAY-- WHENEVER I TRY TO TALK TO SOMEONE MY OWN AGE I SCREW IT UP. OUTSIDE THE X-MEN, I DON'T SEEM TO FIT ANYWHERE...
...EXCEPT WITH DOUG. WE MESH REAL WELL.

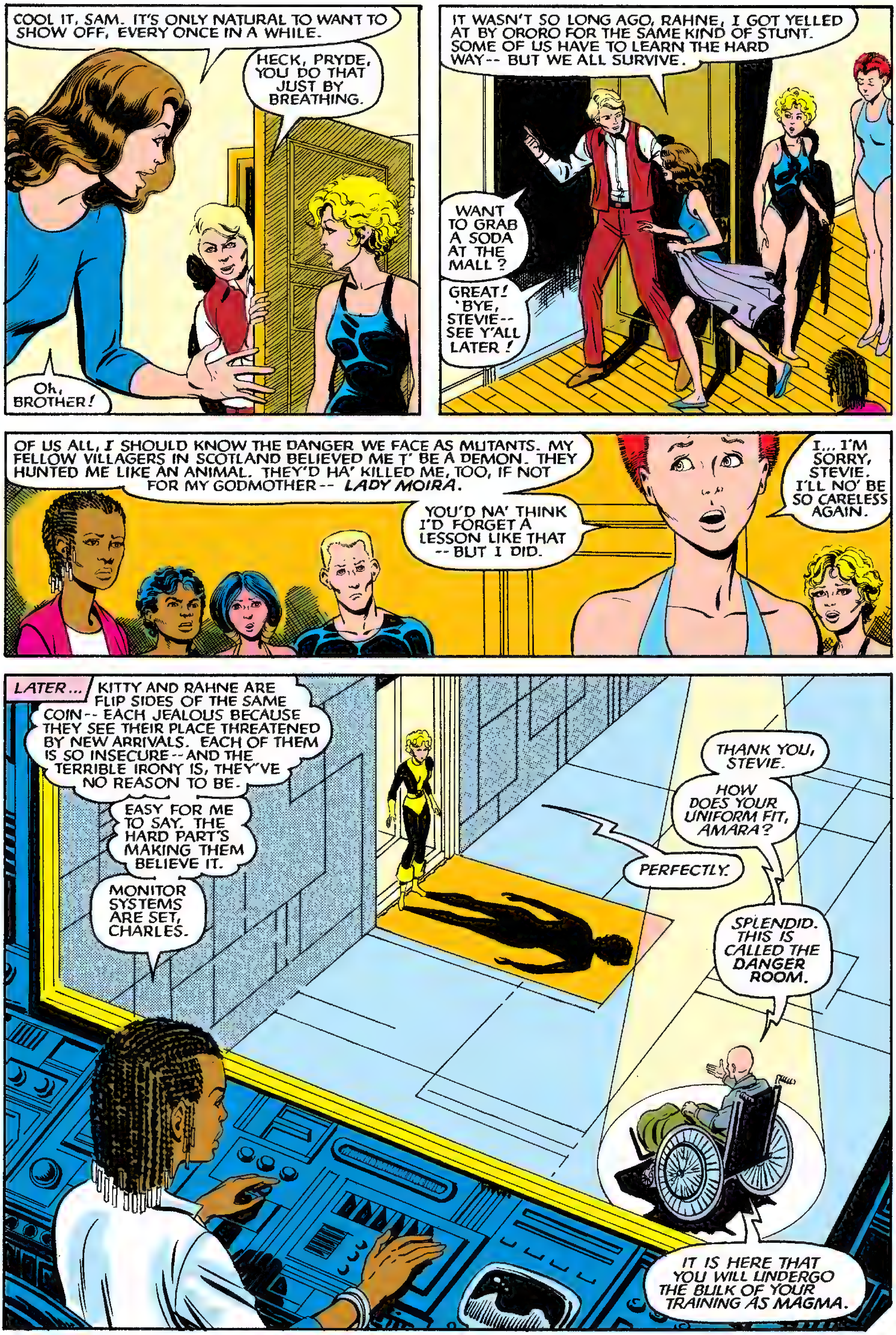

BUT WHAT EFFECT WILL OUR FRIENDSHIP HAVE ON MY RELATIONSHIP WITH *PETER RASPUTIN*?
I LOVE PETER.
SUPPOSE I START TO LOVE DOUG, TOO-- *oh!?!*
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
LOOKING AFTER OUR OWN, Ms. PRYDE.
FROM WHAT I SAW OF AMARA, Mr. DaCOSTA--
--SHE CAN TAKE PRETTY GOOD CARE OF HERSELF.
YOU GUYS ARE ACTING AWFULLY TOUCHY.
ARE YOU SURPRISED?
YOU'VE MADE NO SECRET OF YOUR DISLIKE FOR US "*X-BABIES*."
IT SORT'A MAKES TONIGHT'S SUDDEN SOLICITUDE RING A LITTLE HOLLOW, Y'KNOW?
I CAN TAKE A HINT.
DO BETTER THAN THAT. TAKE A HIKE.
*KATHERINE!*
*I WILL BROOK NO FURTHER DELAY!*
*REPORT TO MY OFFICE!*
*OCH*, DANI, THE PROFESSOR SOUNDED VERRA ANGRY.
KITTY MAY BE A PAIN, DANI, BUT I WOULDN'T BE IN HER SHOES NOW...
...FOR THE WORLD.

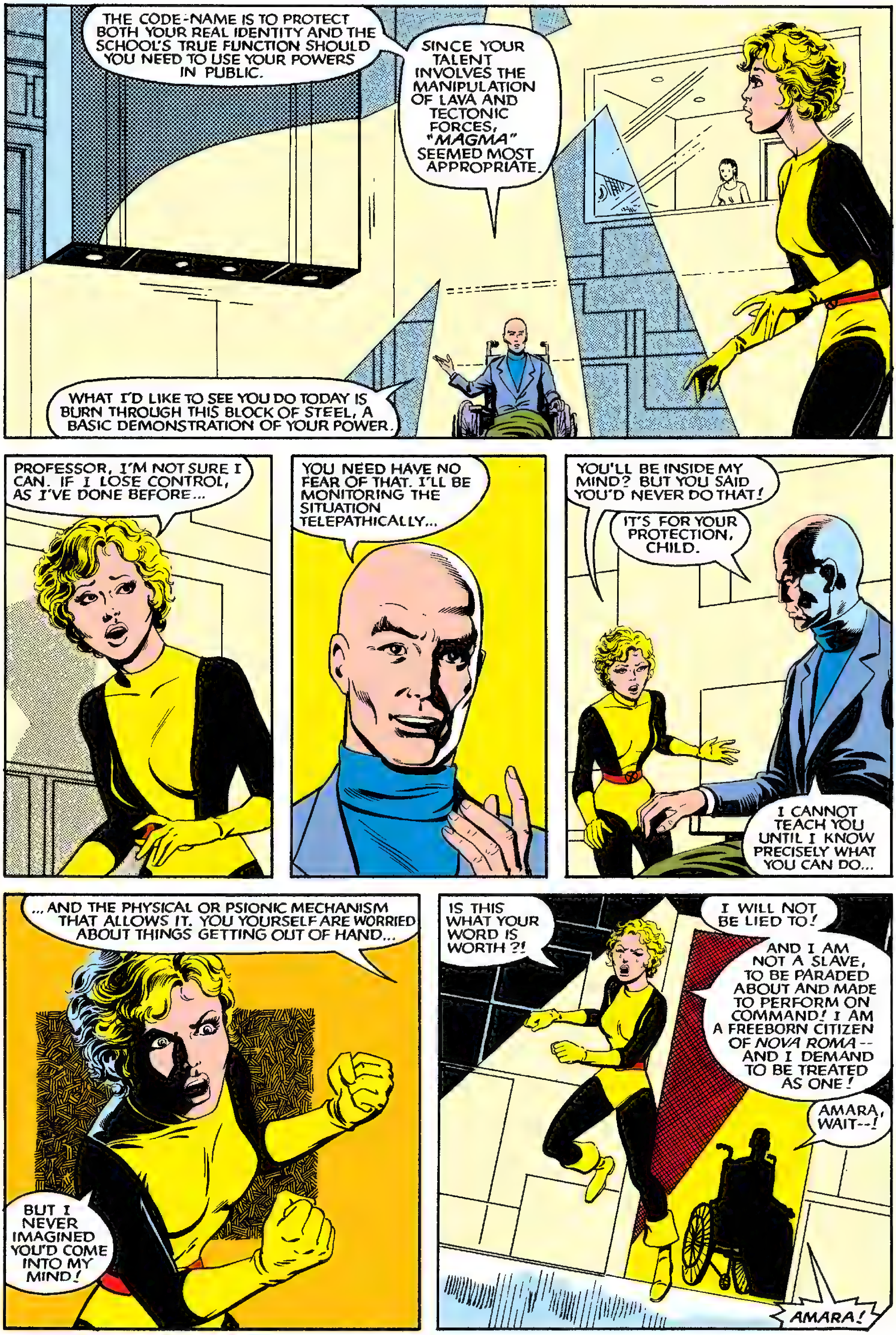

YOU HAD A TRAINING SESSION SCHEDULED FOR THIS EVENING.
IT ISN'T THE FIRST YOU'VE MISSED, KITTY. FOR ALL THAT YOU'RE AN X-MAN, WE STILL KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF YOUR PHASING POWERS.
I DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE. WHEN DOUG AND I ARE WORKING, WE TEND TO LOSE TRACK OF EVERYTHING ELSE.
KITTY, NO ONE IS MORE PLEASED THAN I...
...TO SEE YOU MAKING FRIENDS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL, AND EXERCISING YOUR INTELLECT TO ITS FULLEST CAPACITY. BUT WHEN YOU JOINED THE X-MEN, YOU CHOSE TO ACCEPT CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES.
YOUR TEAM-MATES' LIVES DEPEND ON YOU, AS YOURS DOES ON THEM.
YOU MUST DECIDE, YOUNG LADY, WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE PREPARED TO HONOR THOSE OBLIGATIONS.
FURTHERMORE, THIS IDIOTIC FEUD BETWEEN YOU AND THE NEW MUTANTS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH. NOVICES THEY MAY BE, BUT HARDLY "X-BABIES"--ESPECIALLY WHEN TWO OF THEM ARE OLDER THAN YOU.
IS THAT ALL, SIR?
THINK BACK ON HOW YOU FELT, WHEN YOU FIRST REALIZED WHO AND WHAT YOU WERE--
--THE EXCITEMENT, AND THE TERROR.
HELP THE MUTANTS. PERHAPS, IN DOING SO, YOU'LL BE BETTER ABLE TO COME TO TERMS WITH YOURSELF.
I'LL... TRY, SIR.
IF YOU WANT ME, I'LL BE IN MY ROOM.

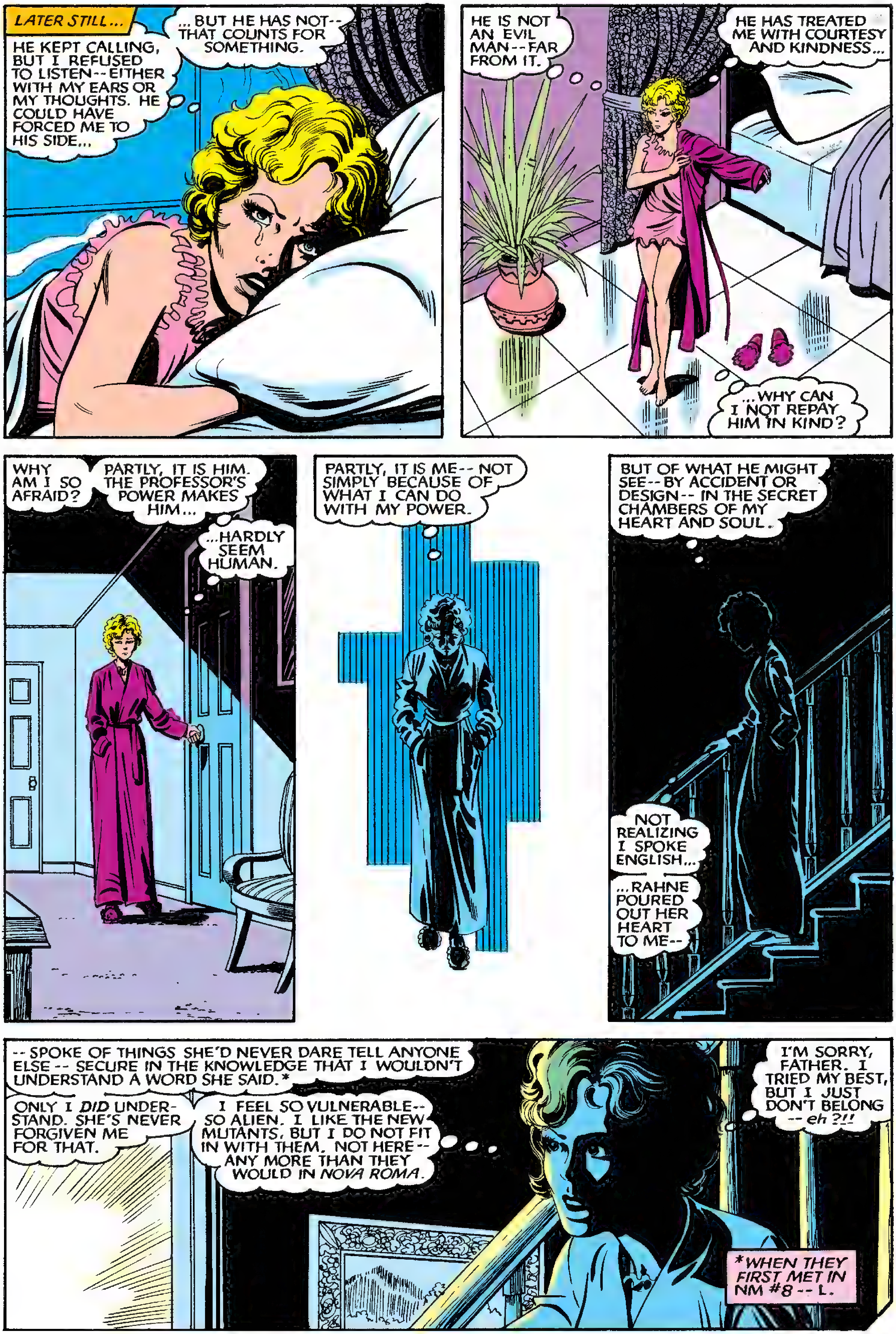

KITTY WANTED SO BADLY TO BE AN X-MAN. SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE'S HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS.
HER ROOM-MATE *ILLYANA* IS UPSTAIRS. THEY'RE BEST FRIENDS. I HOPE KITTY TALKS THINGS OUT WITH HER.
I WISH AMARA HAD SUCH A CONFIDENCE.
THE NIGHT'S GETTING CHILL.
AS SOON AS SHE'S ASLEEP, I'LL HAVE THE MUTANTS PUT HER TO BED.
THAT REMINDS ME, I MUST SCHEDULE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR ROBERTO AND RAHNE.
MOBSTERS INJECTED THEM WITH A TERATOGENETIC DRUG -- A SYNTHETIC MUTAGEN -- DESIGNED TO REPLICATE THE PROCESS THAT CREATED *CLOAK* AND *DAGGER.**
THE CHEMICAL WAS SUPPOSEDLY BURNED OUT OF THEIR SYSTEMS -- BY THOSE SELFSAME MYSTERY BEINGS -- BUT I HAVE TO BE CERTAIN THERE ARE NO LONG-TERM AFTER-EFFECTS.
MY TASK WOULD BE EASIER IF I KNEW PRECISELY WHAT IT DID TO CLOAK AND DAGGER. SHOULD I OR THE X-MEN ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THEM?
**SEE MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL #6* -- LOUISE.
OR SHOULD I LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE? THEY REFUSED CANNONBALL'S INVITATION TO JOIN THE SCHOOL.
*Ahhh,* LILANDRA. I COULD USE YOUR ADVICE, MY DARLING.
OR JUST YOUR PRESENCE --
-- A'OWWW!
THE SCANNING WAVE!* AGAIN, IT ERUPTS FROM NOWHERE, WITHOUT WARNING, TO DISAPPEAR AS SUDDENLY AS IT ARRIVED!
**FIRST FELT IN X-MEN #178* -- L.
THIS CONTACT WAS MORE INTENSE -- AND PAINFUL. AND I'M NO CLOSER TO LEARNING ITS ORIGIN OR PURPOSE.
I SHOULD DEVOTE ALL MY ENERGIES TO SOLVING THIS MYSTERY -- BUT IF I DO, WHO WILL LOOK AFTER MY STUDENTS?
MY OBLIGATIONS BIND ME AS TIGHTLY AS KITTY. UNTIL I'M CERTAIN THIS REPRESENTS A THREAT I WILL KEEP ON AS BEFORE.

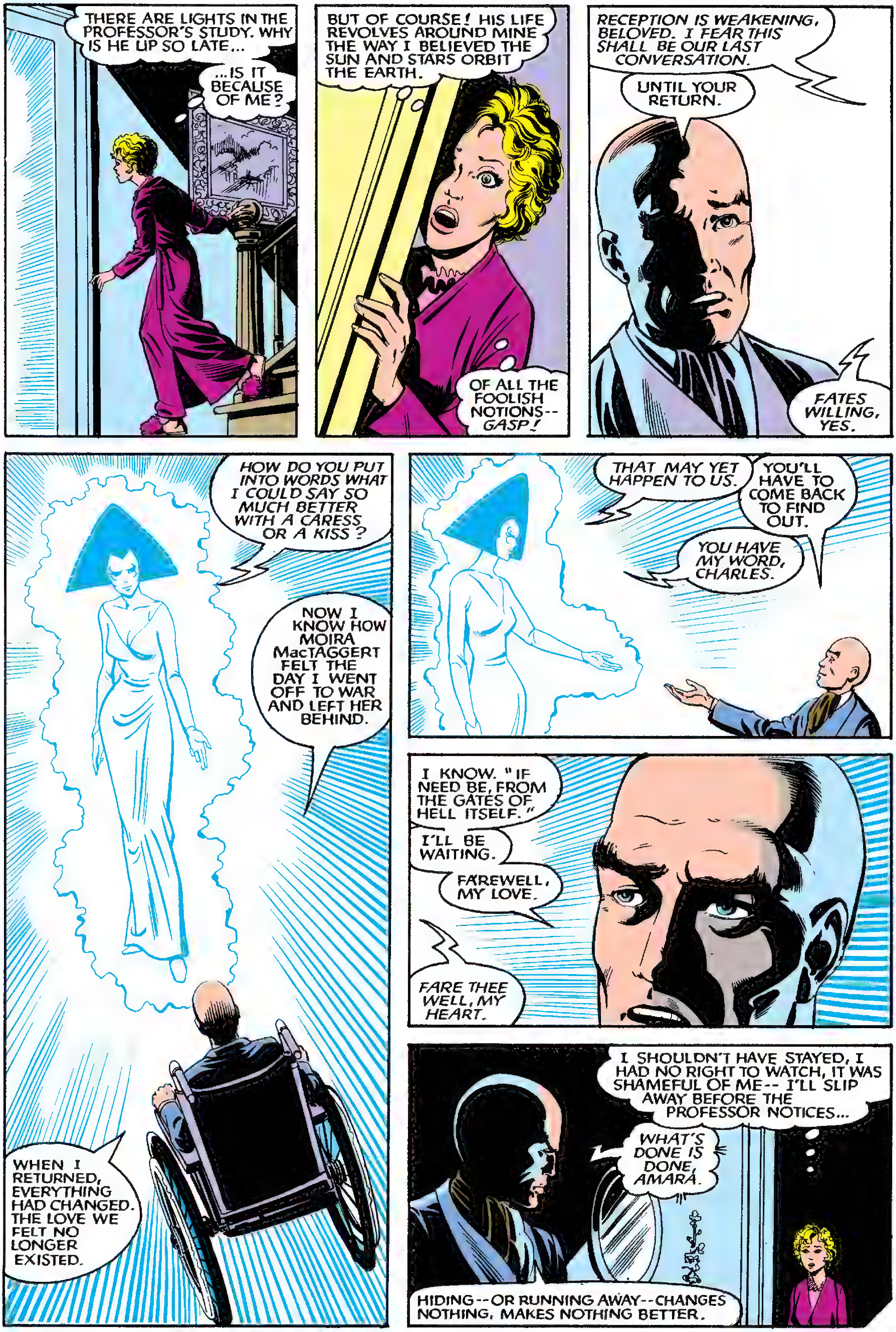

YOU LOOK A LITTLE GREY THIS MORNING, PROFESSOR.
I DIDN'T GET MUCH SLEEP, DANI-- A HEADACHE.
THIS DARN MACHINE'S DOIN' ITS LEVEL BEST T' GIVE *ME* ONE, PROFESSOR.
EACH TIME I THINK I'VE GOT IT FIGURED OUT, IT TRIPS ME UP.
THERE'S REALLY NOTHING TO IT, SAM.
C'MON, HOTSHOT-- YOU WERE WEANED ON THESE MONSTERS.
MERELY ONE OF MANY TALENTS, *MENINA*.
*CHEER UP, SAM. THINGS AREN'T THAT BAD.*
AH FEEL SO... OUTCLASSED, SIR.
*I'LL CUE YOU TELEPATHICALLY, STEP-BY-STEP THROUGH THE LESSON.*
THIS IS *MAGIC!* I PRESS THIS SQUARE-- AND A LETTER APPEARS ON THE GLASS BEFORE ME!
HONORED TEACHER, WOULD YOU EXPLAIN?
GLADLY, AMARA.
*AND SOON...*
AMARA'S A BARBARIAN, A HEATHEN SAVAGE-- BUT SHE GETS THE HANG O' THESE GADGETS FAR FASTER'N ME.
IT'S TIME I FACED FACTS. I'M AS STUPID AS I AM UGLY.
*"IF I'M ACCEPTED HERE, IT'S B'CAUSE I'M A WEREWOLF, NA' B'CAUSE I'M ME."*
HOW CAN RAHNE THINK THAT? IT JUST ISN'T SO. BUT HOW DO I CONVINCE THE POOR GIRL?

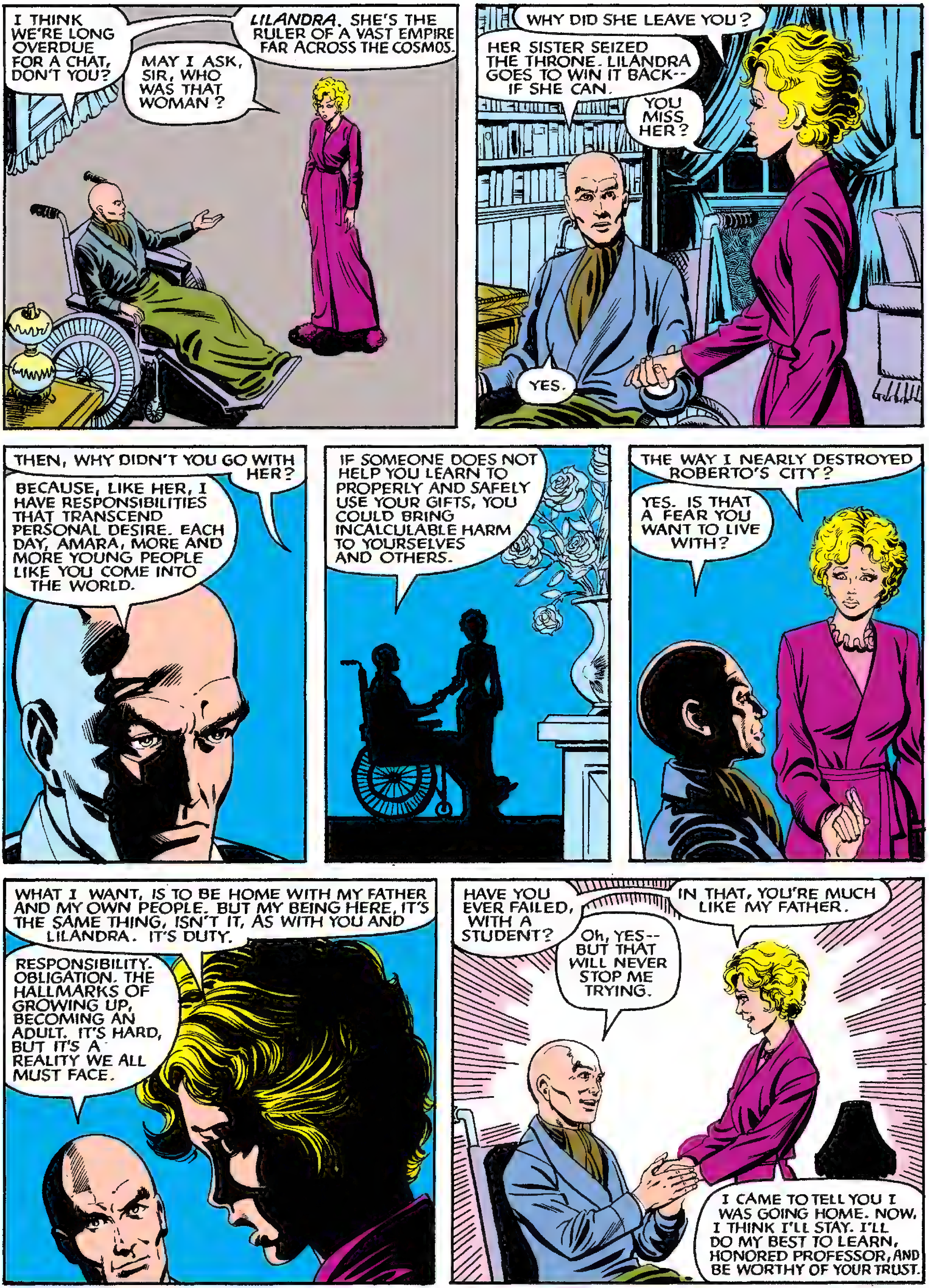

THEIR ACADEMIC CLASSES OVER, THE KIDS HIKE INTO SALEM CENTER, FOR A TWO-HOUR SESSION AT STEVIE HUNTER'S DANCE STUDIO...
VERY NICE, AMARA. YOU'VE HAD TRAINING?
WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG.
Ah, BUT STEVIE, F'R ALL HER FANCY SCHOOLING, CAN YON LASSIE DO-- *THIS?!*
ARE YOU *CRAZY,* GIRL?!! WHAT D'YOU THINK YOU'RE *DOIN',* SHOWIN' OFF YOUR POWERS LIKE THAT IN *PUBLIC!?!*
SUPPOSE SOMEONE SAW YOU, HOW'D YOU EXPLAIN YOURSELF, huh?!!
MUST WE FOREVER HIDE WHAT WE ARE?! IS BEING A MUTANT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF, OR FORBIDDEN?
AYE.


COOL IT, SAM. IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO WANT TO SHOW OFF, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
HECK, PRYDE, YOU DO THAT JUST BY BREATHING.
Oh, BROTHER!
IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO, RAHNE, I GOT YELLED AT BY ORORO FOR THE SAME KIND OF STUNT. SOME OF US HAVE TO LEARN THE HARD WAY-- BUT WE ALL SURVIVE.
WANT TO GRAB A SODA AT THE MALL?
GREAT! 'BYE, STEVIE-- SEE Y'ALL LATER!
OF US ALL, *I* SHOULD KNOW THE DANGER WE FACE AS MUTANTS. MY FELLOW VILLAGERS IN SCOTLAND BELIEVED ME T' BE A DEMON. THEY HUNTED ME LIKE AN ANIMAL. THEY'D HA' KILLED ME, TOO, IF NOT FOR MY GODMOTHER-- *LADY MOIRA*.
YOU'D NA' THINK I'D FORGET A LESSON LIKE THAT -- BUT I DID.
I... I'M SORRY, STEVIE. I'LL NO' BE SO CARELESS AGAIN.
LATER...
KITTY AND RAHNE ARE FLIP SIDES OF THE SAME COIN-- EACH JEALOUS BECAUSE THEY SEE THEIR PLACE THREATENED BY NEW ARRIVALS. EACH OF THEM IS SO INSECURE--AND THE TERRIBLE IRONY IS, THEY'VE NO REASON TO BE.
EASY FOR ME TO SAY. THE HARD PART'S MAKING THEM BELIEVE IT.
MONITOR SYSTEMS ARE SET, CHARLES.
THANK YOU, STEVIE.
HOW DOES YOUR UNIFORM FIT, AMARA?
PERFECTLY.
SPLENDID. THIS IS CALLED THE DANGER ROOM.
IT IS HERE THAT YOU WILL UNDERGO THE BULK OF YOUR TRAINING AS MAGMA.


THE CODE-NAME IS TO PROTECT BOTH YOUR REAL IDENTITY AND THE SCHOOL'S TRUE FUNCTION SHOULD YOU NEED TO USE YOUR POWERS IN PUBLIC.
SINCE YOUR TALENT INVOLVES THE MANIPULATION OF LAVA AND TECTONIC FORCES, "*MAGMA*" SEEMED MOST APPROPRIATE.
WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU DO TODAY IS BURN THROUGH THIS BLOCK OF STEEL, A BASIC DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR POWER.
PROFESSOR, I'M NOT SURE I CAN. IF I LOSE CONTROL, AS I'VE DONE BEFORE...
YOU NEED HAVE NO FEAR OF THAT. I'LL BE MONITORING THE SITUATION TELEPATHICALLY...
YOU'LL BE INSIDE MY MIND? BUT YOU SAID YOU'D NEVER DO THAT!
IT'S FOR YOUR PROTECTION, CHILD.
I CANNOT TEACH YOU UNTIL I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT YOU CAN DO...
...AND THE PHYSICAL OR PSIONIC MECHANISM THAT ALLOWS IT. YOU YOURSELF ARE WORRIED ABOUT THINGS GETTING OUT OF HAND...
BUT I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D COME INTO MY MIND!
IS THIS WHAT YOUR WORD IS WORTH ?!
I WILL NOT BE LIED TO!
AND I AM NOT A SLAVE, TO BE PARADED ABOUT AND MADE TO PERFORM ON COMMAND! I AM A FREEBORN CITIZEN OF *NOVA ROMA* -- AND I DEMAND TO BE TREATED AS ONE!
AMARA, WAIT--!
AMARA!


LATER STILL...
HE KEPT CALLING, BUT I REFUSED TO LISTEN--EITHER WITH MY EARS OR MY THOUGHTS. HE COULD HAVE FORCED ME TO HIS SIDE...
...BUT HE HAS NOT-- THAT COUNTS FOR SOMETHING.
HE IS NOT AN EVIL MAN--FAR FROM IT.
HE HAS TREATED ME WITH COURTESY AND KINDNESS...
...WHY CAN I NOT REPAY HIM IN KIND?
WHY AM I SO AFRAID?
PARTLY, IT IS HIM. THE PROFESSOR'S POWER MAKES HIM...
...HARDLY SEEM HUMAN.
PARTLY, IT IS ME--NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF WHAT I CAN DO WITH MY POWER.
BUT OF WHAT HE MIGHT SEE--BY ACCIDENT OR DESIGN--IN THE SECRET CHAMBERS OF MY HEART AND SOUL.
NOT REALIZING I SPOKE ENGLISH...
...RAHNE POURED OUT HER HEART TO ME--
--SPOKE OF THINGS SHE'D NEVER DARE TELL ANYONE ELSE--SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD SHE SAID.*
ONLY I *DID* UNDERSTAND. SHE'S NEVER FORGIVEN ME FOR THAT.
I FEEL SO VULNERABLE--SO ALIEN. I LIKE THE NEW MUTANTS, BUT I DO NOT FIT IN WITH THEM. NOT HERE--ANY MORE THAN THEY WOULD IN *NOVA ROMA*.
I'M SORRY, FATHER. I TRIED MY BEST, BUT I JUST DON'T BELONG --*eh ?!!*
*WHEN THEY FIRST MET IN NM #8 -- L.


THERE ARE LIGHTS IN THE PROFESSOR'S STUDY. WHY IS HE UP SO LATE...
...IS IT BECAUSE OF ME?
BUT OF COURSE! HIS LIFE REVOLVES AROUND MINE THE WAY I BELIEVED THE SUN AND STARS ORBIT THE EARTH.
OF ALL THE FOOLISH NOTIONS-- GASP!
RECEPTION IS WEAKENING, BELOVED. I FEAR THIS SHALL BE OUR LAST CONVERSATION.
UNTIL YOUR RETURN.
FATES WILLING, YES.
HOW DO YOU PUT INTO WORDS WHAT I COULD SAY SO MUCH BETTER WITH A CARESS OR A KISS?
NOW I KNOW HOW MOIRA MacTAGGERT FELT THE DAY I WENT OFF TO WAR AND LEFT HER BEHIND.
WHEN I RETURNED, EVERYTHING HAD CHANGED. THE LOVE WE FELT NO LONGER EXISTED.
THAT MAY YET HAPPEN TO US.
YOU'LL HAVE TO COME BACK TO FIND OUT.
YOU HAVE MY WORD, CHARLES.
I KNOW. "IF NEED BE, FROM THE GATES OF HELL ITSELF."
I'LL BE WAITING.
FAREWELL, MY LOVE.
FARE THEE WELL, MY HEART.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE STAYED, I HAD NO RIGHT TO WATCH, IT WAS SHAMEFUL OF ME-- I'LL SLIP AWAY BEFORE THE PROFESSOR NOTICES...
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE, AMARA.
HIDING--OR RUNNING AWAY--CHANGES NOTHING, MAKES NOTHING BETTER.


I THINK WE'RE LONG OVERDUE FOR A CHAT, DON'T YOU?
MAY I ASK, SIR, WHO WAS THAT WOMAN?
*LILANDRA*. SHE'S THE RULER OF A VAST EMPIRE FAR ACROSS THE COSMOS.
WHY DID SHE LEAVE YOU?
HER SISTER SEIZED THE THRONE. LILANDRA GOES TO WIN IT BACK-- IF SHE CAN.
YOU MISS HER?
YES.
THEN, WHY DIDN'T YOU GO WITH HER?
BECAUSE, LIKE HER, I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT TRANSCEND PERSONAL DESIRE. EACH DAY, AMARA, MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU COME INTO THE WORLD.
IF SOMEONE DOES NOT HELP YOU LEARN TO PROPERLY AND SAFELY USE YOUR GIFTS, YOU COULD BRING INCALCULABLE HARM TO YOURSELVES AND OTHERS.
THE WAY I NEARLY DESTROYED ROBERTO'S CITY?
YES. IS THAT A FEAR YOU WANT TO LIVE WITH?
WHAT I WANT, IS TO BE HOME WITH MY FATHER AND MY OWN PEOPLE. BUT MY BEING HERE, IT'S THE SAME THING, ISN'T IT, AS WITH YOU AND LILANDRA. IT'S DUTY.
RESPONSIBILITY. OBLIGATION. THE HALLMARKS OF GROWING UP, BECOMING AN ADULT. IT'S HARD, BUT IT'S A REALITY WE ALL MUST FACE.
HAVE YOU EVER FAILED, WITH A STUDENT?
Oh, YES-- BUT THAT WILL NEVER STOP ME TRYING.
IN THAT, YOU'RE MUCH LIKE MY FATHER.
I CAME TO TELL YOU I WAS GOING HOME. NOW, I THINK I'LL STAY. I'LL DO MY BEST TO LEARN, HONORED PROFESSOR, AND BE WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST.

NEXT DO YOU BELIEVE IN-- MAGIK?

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THE NEW MUTANTS™
MANDRAKE

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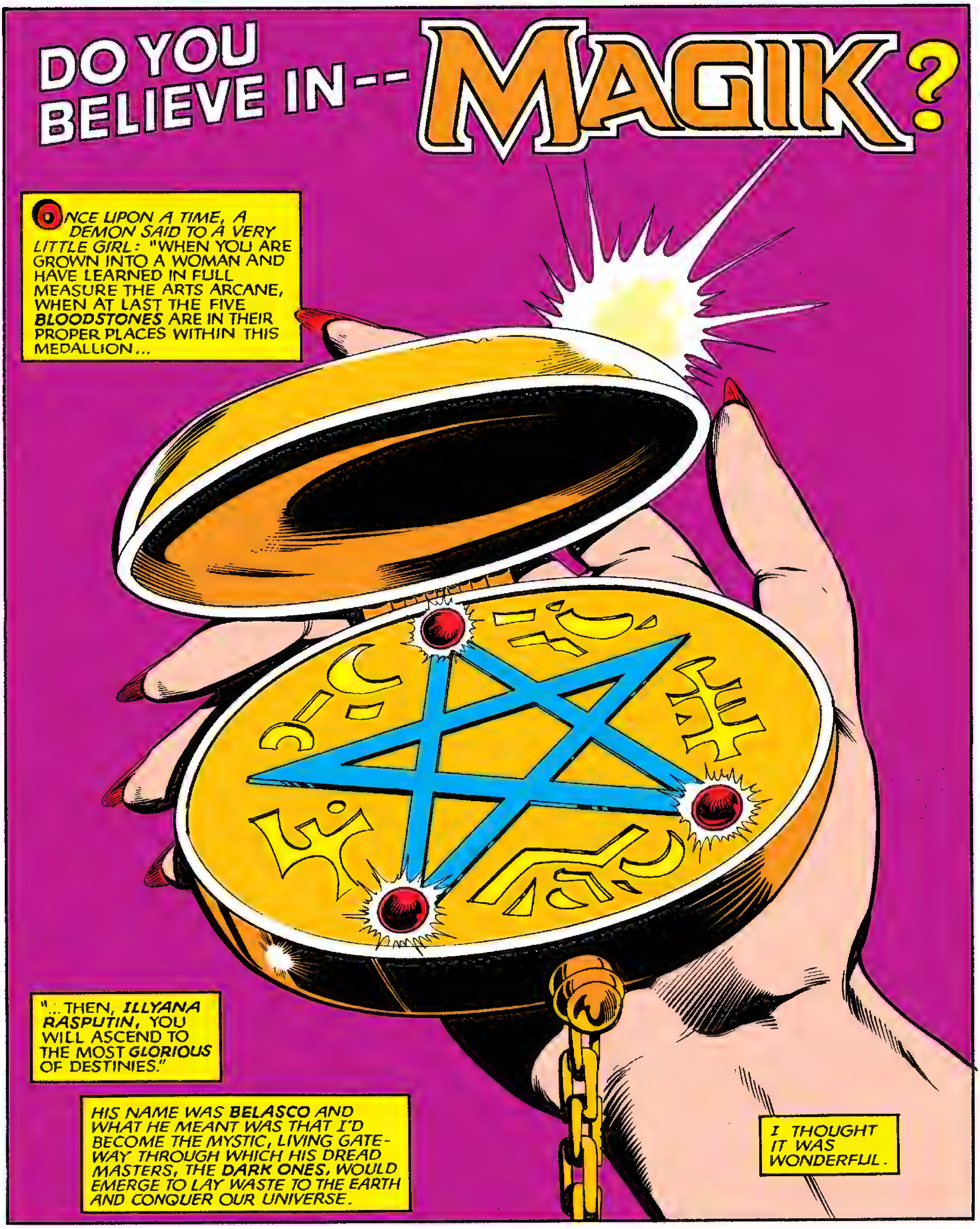
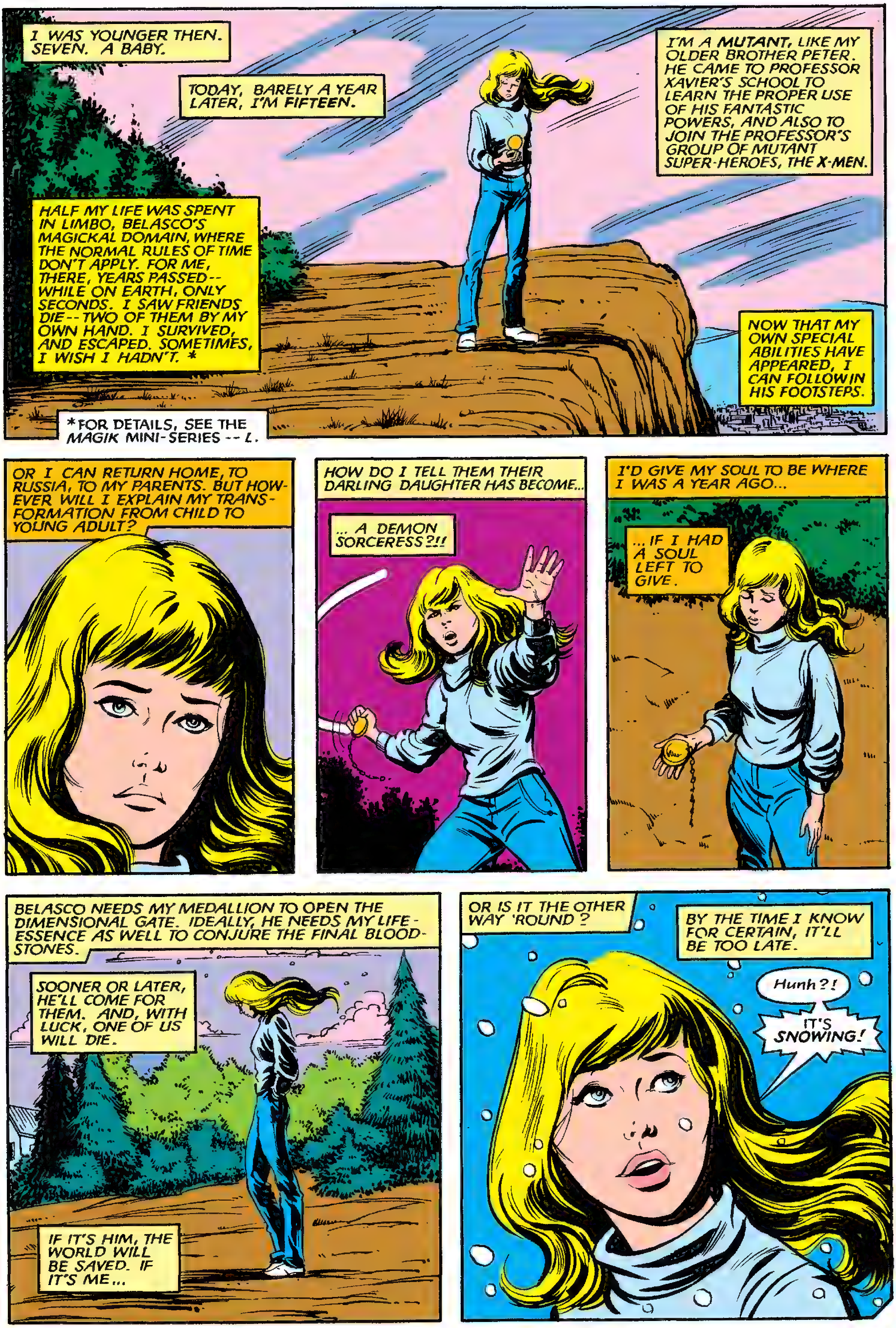
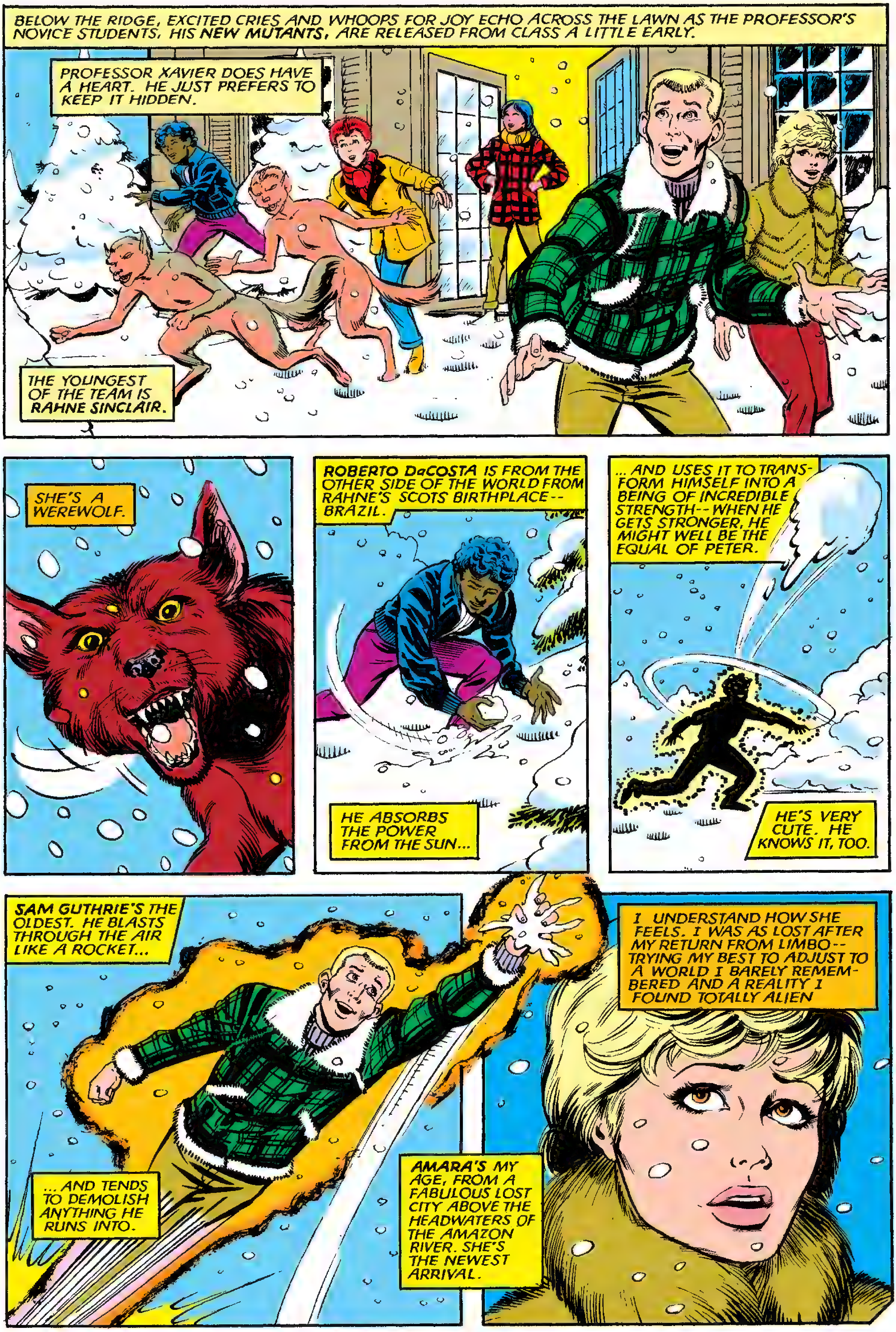
**NEW MUTANTS** *STARS*

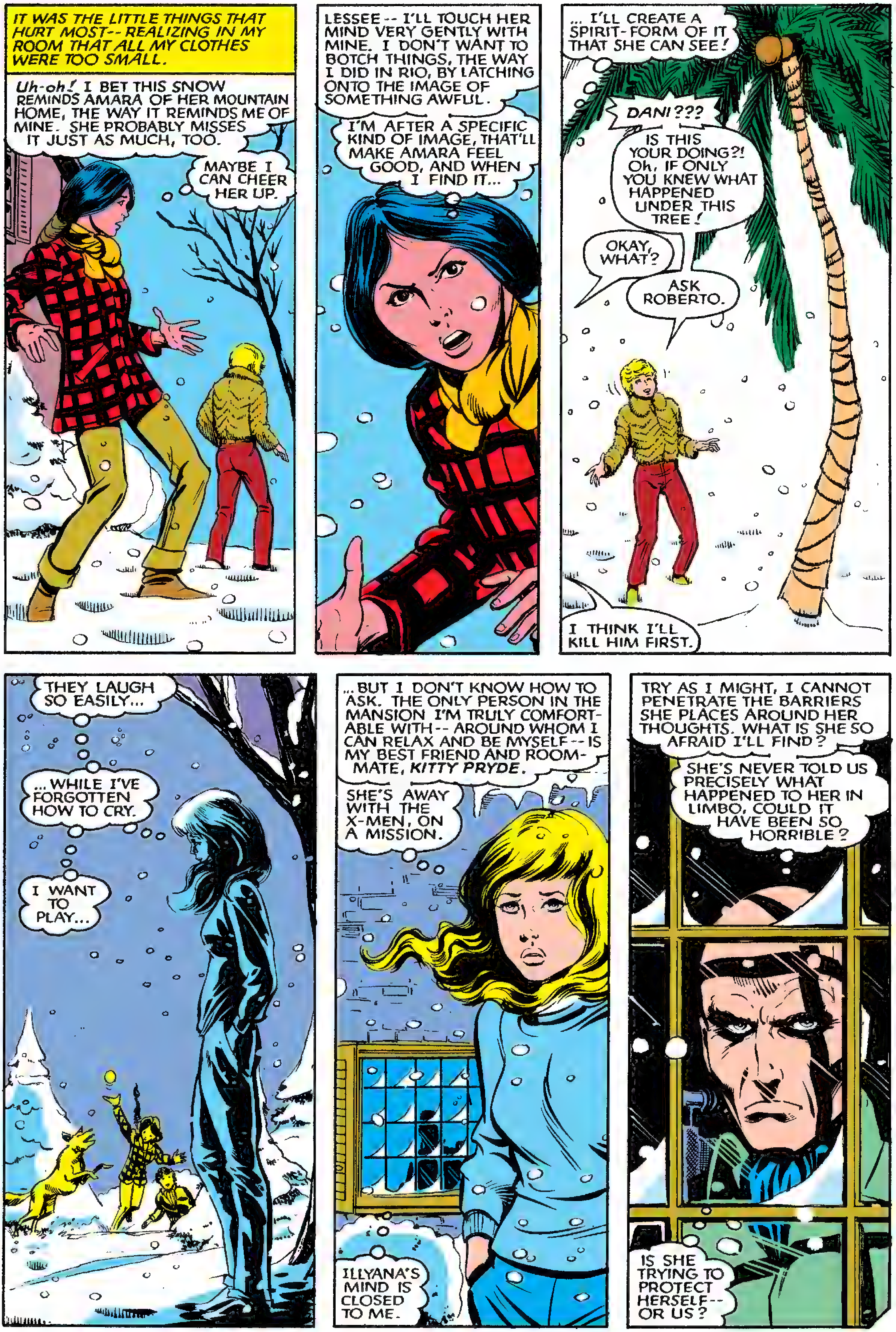
*CREATED BY* CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

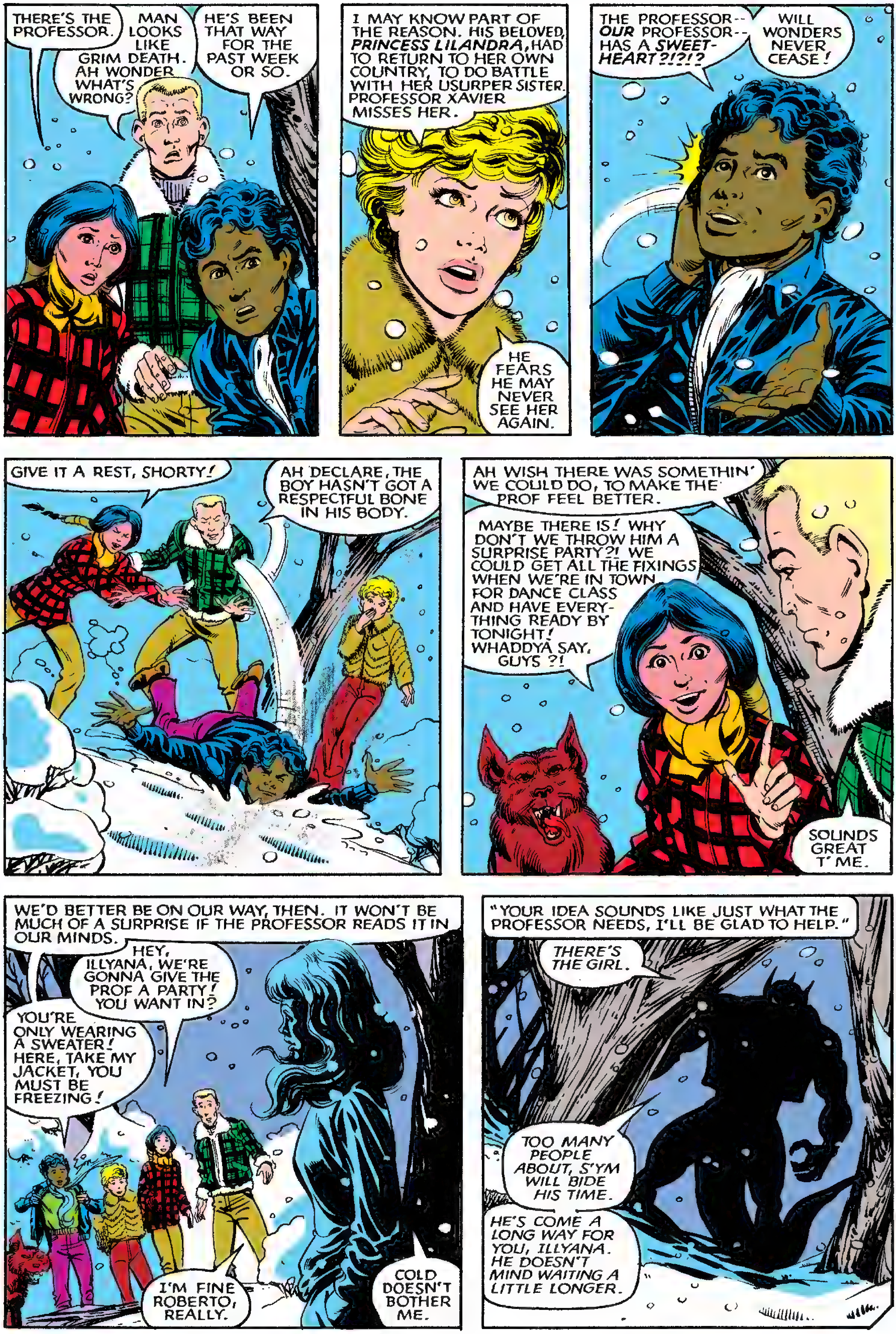
# DO YOU BELIEVE IN-- MAGIK?

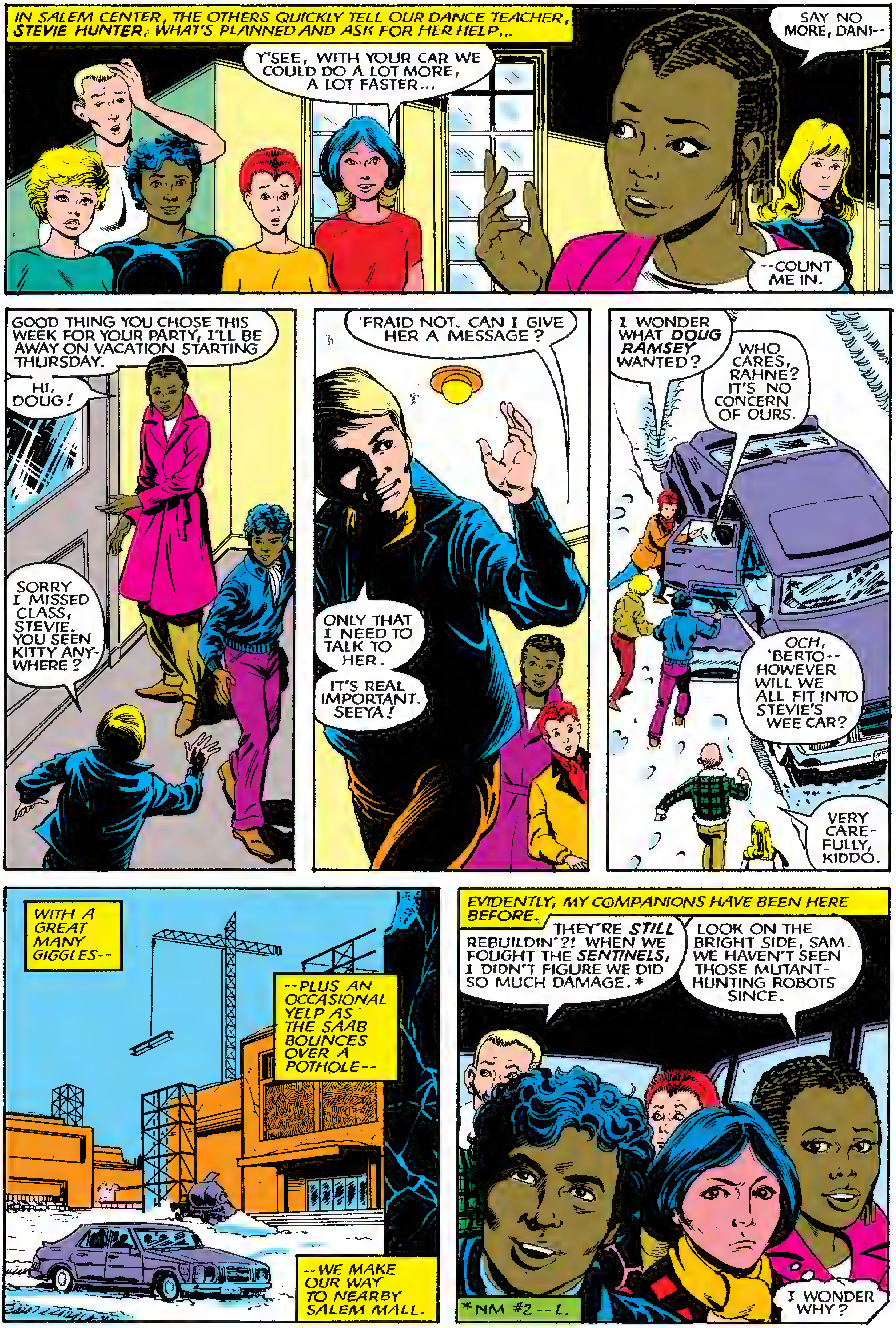

ONCE UPON A TIME, A DEMON SAID TO A VERY LITTLE GIRL: "WHEN YOU ARE GROWN INTO A WOMAN AND HAVE LEARNED IN FULL MEASURE THE ARTS ARCANE, WHEN AT LAST THE FIVE BLOODSTONES ARE IN THEIR PROPER PLACES WITHIN THIS MEDALLION...
"...THEN, ILLYANA RASPUTIN, YOU WILL ASCEND TO THE MOST GLORIOUS OF DESTINIES."
HIS NAME WAS BELASCO AND WHAT HE MEANT WAS THAT I'D BECOME THE MYSTIC, LIVING GATEWAY THROUGH WHICH HIS DREAD MASTERS, THE DARK ONES, WOULD EMERGE TO LAY WASTE TO THE EARTH AND CONQUER OUR UNIVERSE.
I THOUGHT IT WAS WONDERFUL.

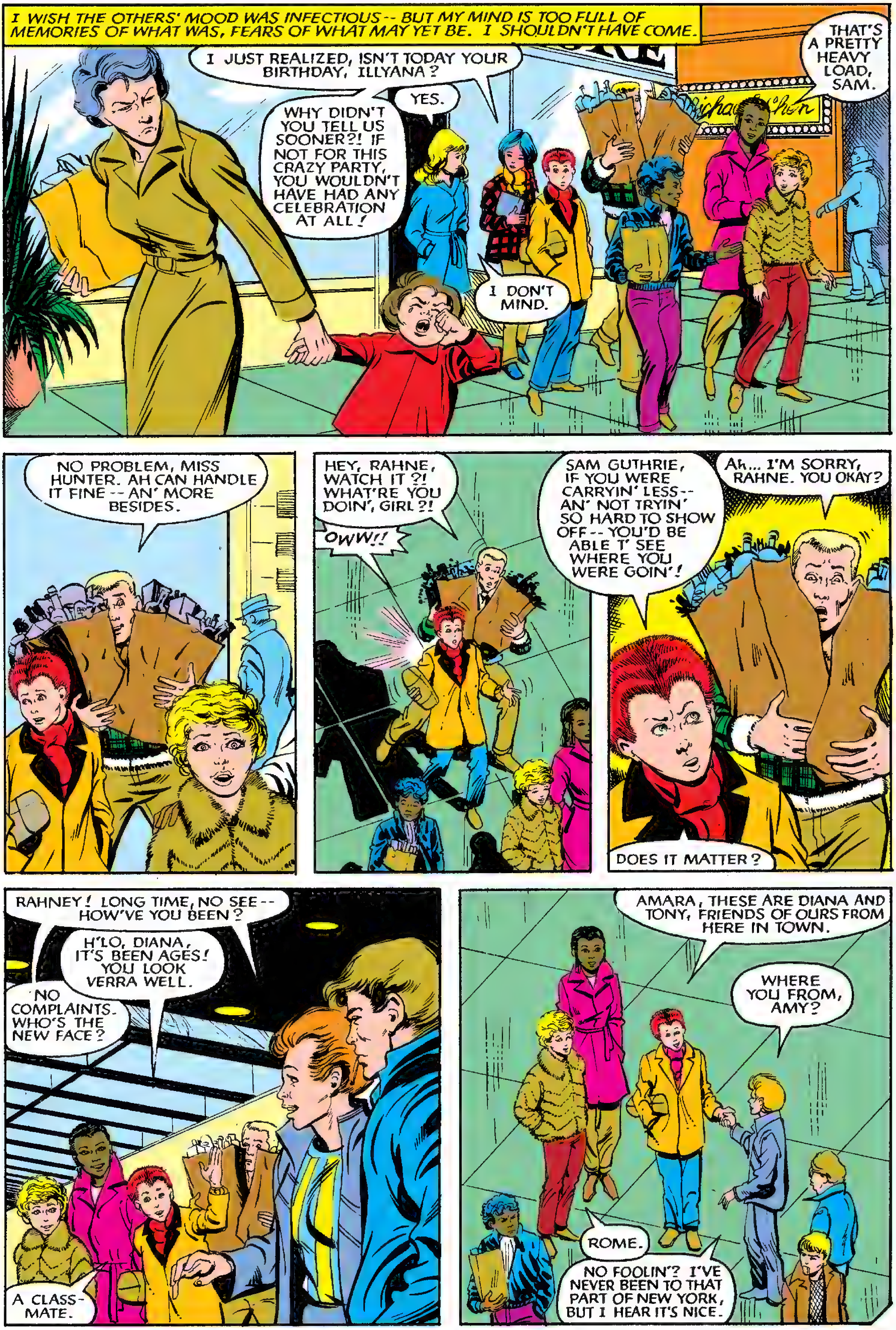

I WAS YOUNGER THEN. SEVEN. A BABY.
TODAY, BARELY A YEAR LATER, I'M FIFTEEN.
I'M A MUTANT, LIKE MY OLDER BROTHER PETER. HE CAME TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL TO LEARN THE PROPER USE OF HIS FANTASTIC POWERS, AND ALSO TO JOIN THE PROFESSOR'S GROUP OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES, THE X-MEN.
HALF MY LIFE WAS SPENT IN LIMBO, BELASCO'S MAGICKAL DOMAIN, WHERE THE NORMAL RULES OF TIME DON'T APPLY. FOR ME, THERE, YEARS PASSED-- WHILE ON EARTH, ONLY SECONDS. I SAW FRIENDS DIE--TWO OF THEM BY MY OWN HAND. I SURVIVED, AND ESCAPED. SOMETIMES, I WISH I HADN'T. *
NOW THAT MY OWN SPECIAL ABILITIES HAVE APPEARED, I CAN FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.
*FOR DETAILS, SEE THE MAGIK MINI-SERIES -- L.
OR I CAN RETURN HOME, TO RUSSIA, TO MY PARENTS. BUT HOWEVER WILL I EXPLAIN MY TRANSFORMATION FROM CHILD TO YOUNG ADULT?
HOW DO I TELL THEM THEIR DARLING DAUGHTER HAS BECOME...
... A DEMON SORCERESS?!!
I'D GIVE MY SOUL TO BE WHERE I WAS A YEAR AGO...
...IF I HAD A SOUL LEFT TO GIVE.
BELASCO NEEDS MY MEDALLION TO OPEN THE DIMENSIONAL GATE. IDEALLY, HE NEEDS MY LIFE-ESSENCE AS WELL TO CONJURE THE FINAL BLOODSTONES.
SOONER OR LATER, HE'LL COME FOR THEM. AND, WITH LUCK, ONE OF US WILL DIE.
IF IT'S HIM, THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED. IF IT'S ME...
OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY 'ROUND?
BY THE TIME I KNOW FOR CERTAIN, IT'LL BE TOO LATE.
Hunh?!
IT'S SNOWING!

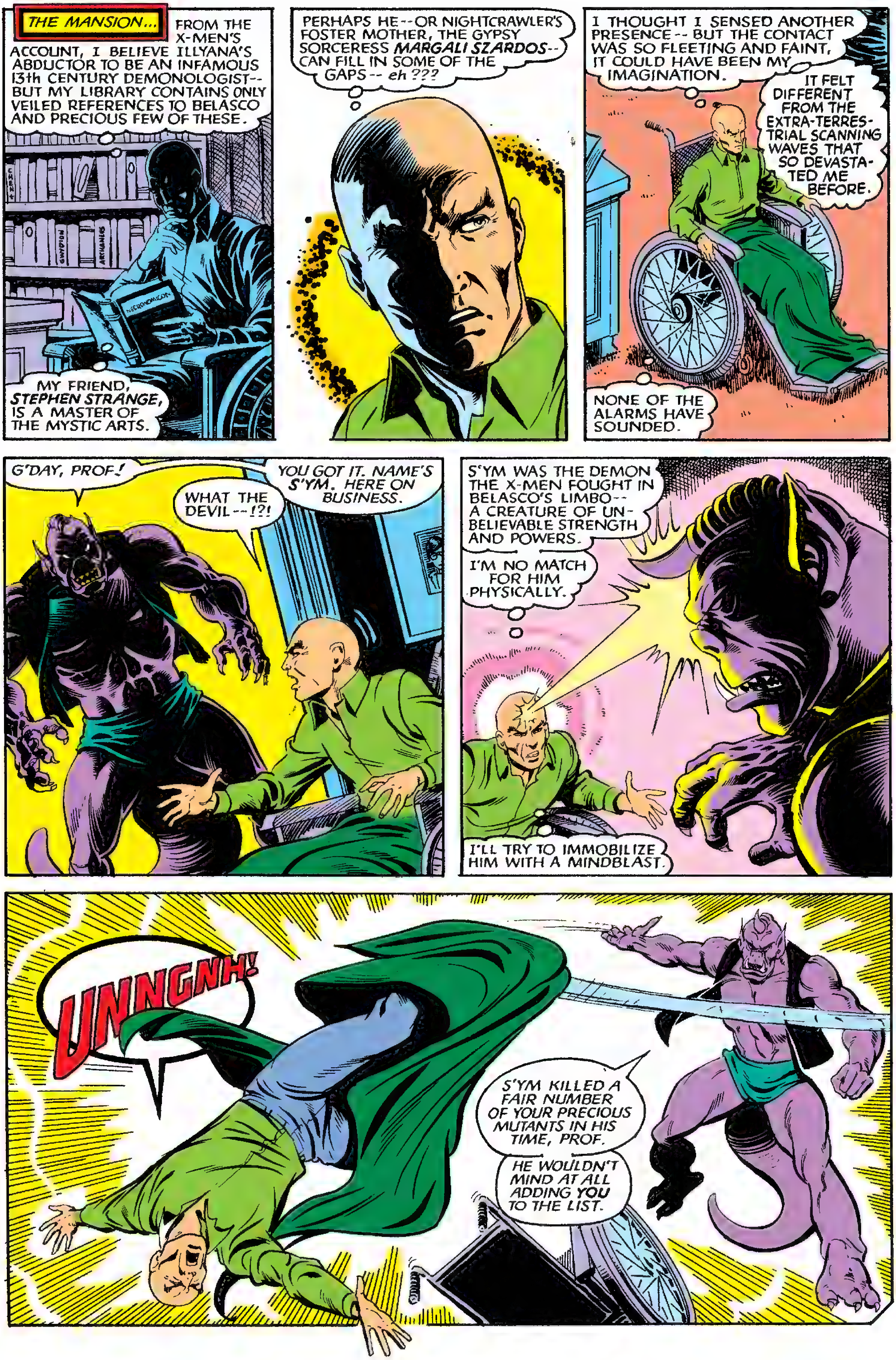

BELOW THE RIDGE, EXCITED CRIES AND WHOOPS FOR JOY ECHO ACROSS THE LAWN AS THE PROFESSOR'S NOVICE STUDENTS, HIS **NEW MUTANTS**, ARE RELEASED FROM CLASS A LITTLE EARLY.
PROFESSOR XAVIER DOES HAVE A HEART. HE JUST PREFERS TO KEEP IT HIDDEN.
THE YOUNGEST OF THE TEAM IS **RAHNE SINCLAIR**.
SHE'S A WEREWOLF.
**ROBERTO DaCOSTA** IS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD FROM RAHNE'S SCOTS BIRTHPLACE-- BRAZIL.
HE ABSORBS THE POWER FROM THE SUN...
...AND USES IT TO TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO A BEING OF INCREDIBLE STRENGTH-- WHEN HE GETS STRONGER, HE MIGHT WELL BE THE EQUAL OF PETER.
HE'S VERY CUTE. HE KNOWS IT, TOO.
**SAM GUTHRIE'S** THE OLDEST. HE BLASTS THROUGH THE AIR LIKE A ROCKET...
...AND TENDS TO DEMOLISH ANYTHING HE RUNS INTO.
**AMARA'S** MY AGE, FROM A FABULOUS LOST CITY ABOVE THE HEADWATERS OF THE AMAZON RIVER. SHE'S THE NEWEST ARRIVAL.
I UNDERSTAND HOW SHE FEELS. I WAS AS LOST AFTER MY RETURN FROM LIMBO-- TRYING MY BEST TO ADJUST TO A WORLD I BARELY REMEMBERED AND A REALITY I FOUND TOTALLY ALIEN

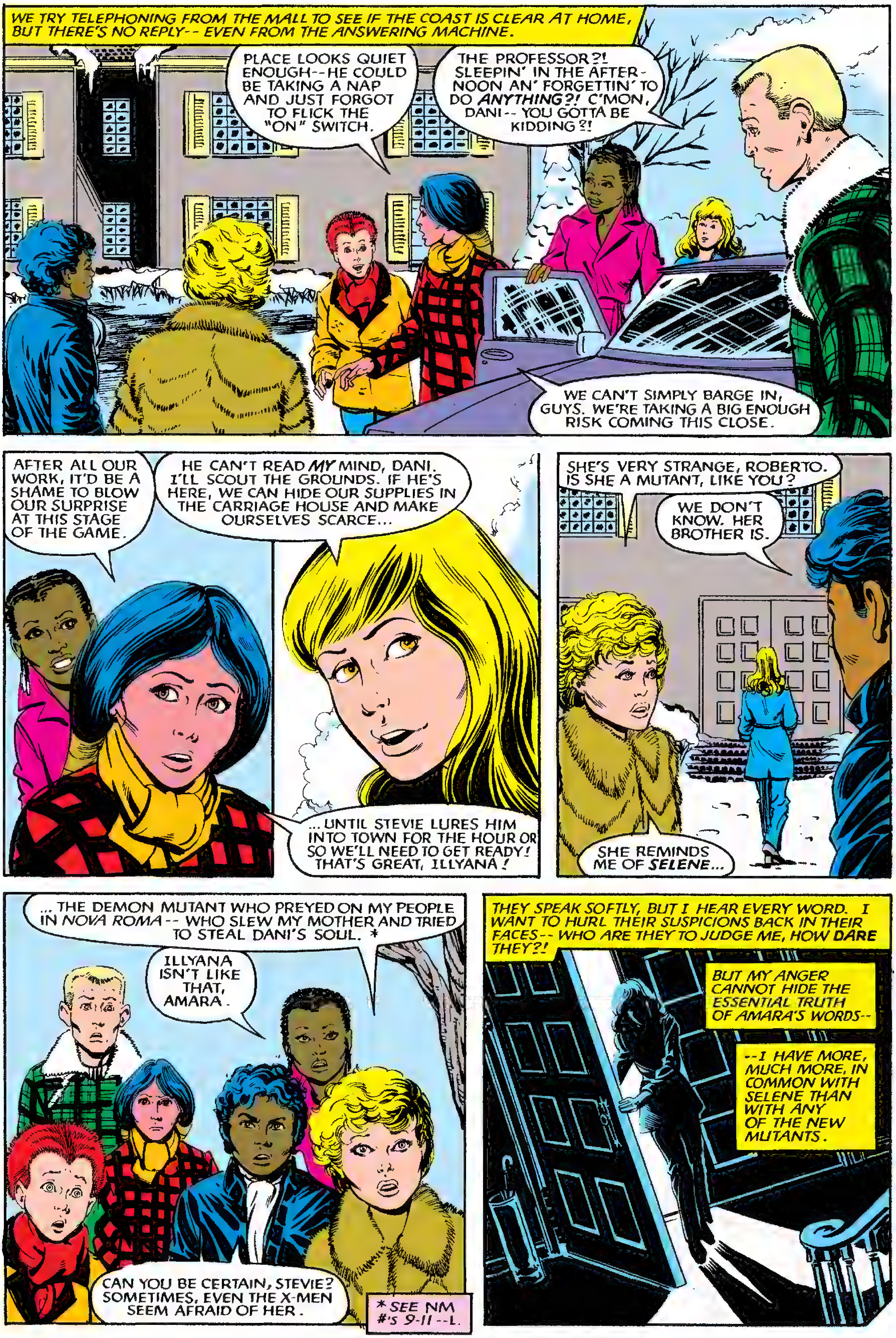

IT WAS THE LITTLE THINGS THAT HURT MOST--REALIZING IN MY ROOM THAT ALL MY CLOTHES WERE TOO SMALL.
Uh-oh! I BET THIS SNOW REMINDS AMARA OF HER MOUNTAIN HOME, THE WAY IT REMINDS ME OF MINE. SHE PROBABLY MISSES IT JUST AS MUCH, TOO.
MAYBE I CAN CHEER HER UP.
LESSEE -- I'LL TOUCH HER MIND VERY GENTLY WITH MINE. I DON'T WANT TO BOTCH THINGS, THE WAY I DID IN RIO, BY LATCHING ONTO THE IMAGE OF SOMETHING AWFUL.
I'M AFTER A SPECIFIC KIND OF IMAGE, THAT'LL MAKE AMARA FEEL GOOD, AND WHEN I FIND IT...
... I'LL CREATE A SPIRIT-FORM OF IT THAT SHE CAN SEE!
DANI???
IS THIS YOUR DOING?! Oh, IF ONLY YOU KNEW WHAT HAPPENED UNDER THIS TREE!
OKAY, WHAT?
ASK ROBERTO.
I THINK I'LL KILL HIM FIRST.
THEY LAUGH SO EASILY...
...WHILE I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO CRY.
I WANT TO PLAY...
...BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK. THE ONLY PERSON IN THE MANSION I'M TRULY COMFORTABLE WITH -- AROUND WHOM I CAN RELAX AND BE MYSELF -- IS MY BEST FRIEND AND ROOMMATE, KITTY PRYDE.
SHE'S AWAY WITH THE X-MEN, ON A MISSION.
ILLYANA'S MIND IS CLOSED TO ME.
TRY AS I MIGHT, I CANNOT PENETRATE THE BARRIERS SHE PLACES AROUND HER THOUGHTS. WHAT IS SHE SO AFRAID I'LL FIND?
SHE'S NEVER TOLD US PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED TO HER IN LIMBO, COULD IT HAVE BEEN SO HORRIBLE?
IS SHE TRYING TO PROTECT HERSELF-- OR US?

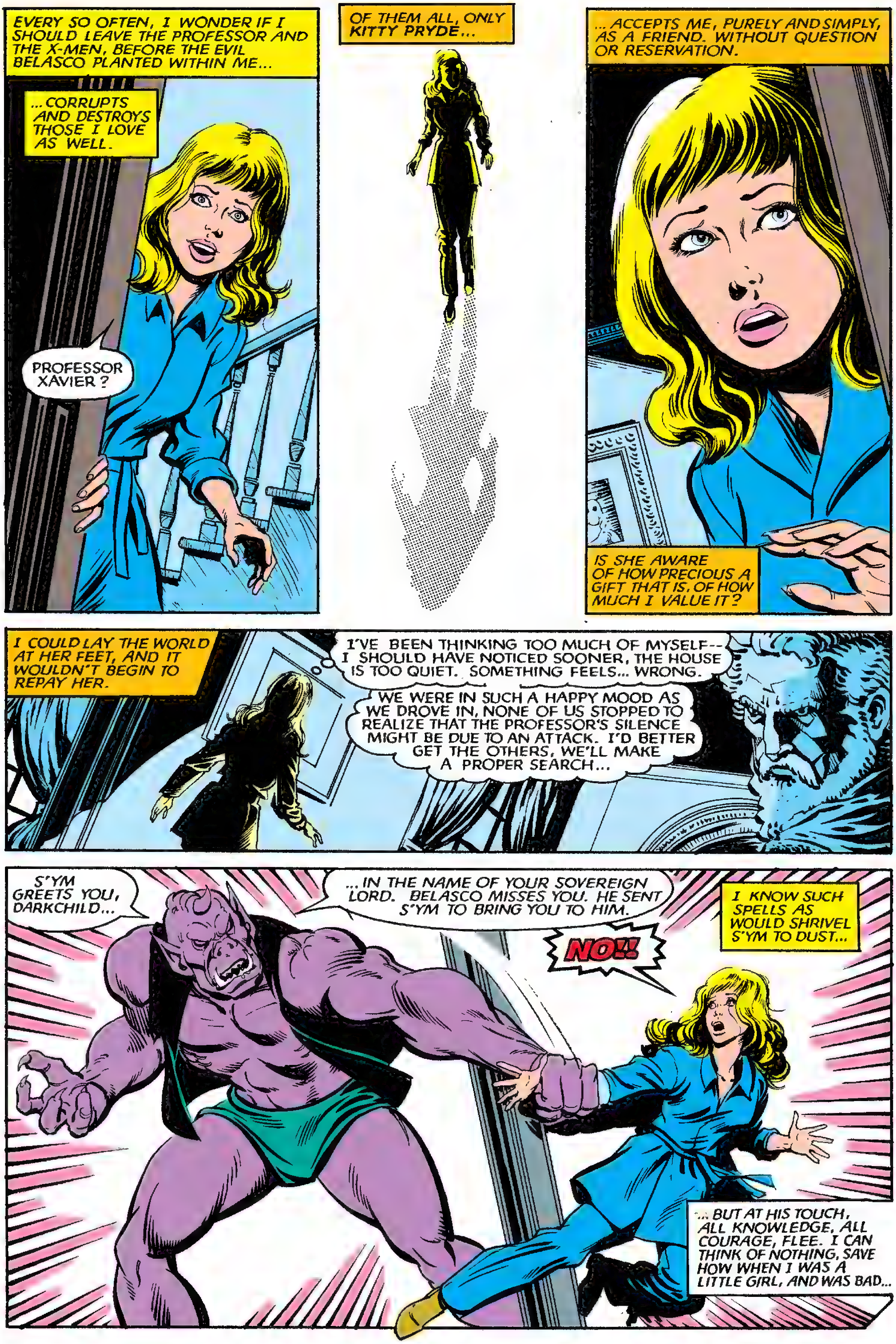

THERE'S THE PROFESSOR.
MAN LOOKS LIKE GRIM DEATH. AH WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?
HE'S BEEN THAT WAY FOR THE PAST WEEK OR SO.
I MAY KNOW PART OF THE REASON. HIS BELOVED, PRINCESS LILANDRA, HAD TO RETURN TO HER OWN COUNTRY, TO DO BATTLE WITH HER USURPER SISTER. PROFESSOR XAVIER MISSES HER.
HE FEARS HE MAY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN.
THE PROFESSOR-- OUR PROFESSOR-- HAS A SWEETHEART?!?!?
WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE!
GIVE IT A REST, SHORTY!
AH DECLARE, THE BOY HASN'T GOT A RESPECTFUL BONE IN HIS BODY.
AH WISH THERE WAS SOMETHIN' WE COULD DO, TO MAKE THE PROF FEEL BETTER.
MAYBE THERE IS! WHY DON'T WE THROW HIM A SURPRISE PARTY?! WE COULD GET ALL THE FIXINGS WHEN WE'RE IN TOWN FOR DANCE CLASS AND HAVE EVERYTHING READY BY TONIGHT! WHADDYA SAY, GUYS?!
SOUNDS GREAT T' ME.
WE'D BETTER BE ON OUR WAY, THEN. IT WON'T BE MUCH OF A SURPRISE IF THE PROFESSOR READS IT IN OUR MINDS.
HEY, ILLYANA, WE'RE GONNA GIVE THE PROF A PARTY! YOU WANT IN?
YOU'RE ONLY WEARING A SWEATER! HERE, TAKE MY JACKET, YOU MUST BE FREEZING!
I'M FINE ROBERTO, REALLY.
COLD DOESN'T BOTHER ME.
"YOUR IDEA SOUNDS LIKE JUST WHAT THE PROFESSOR NEEDS, I'LL BE GLAD TO HELP."
THERE'S THE GIRL.
TOO MANY PEOPLE ABOUT, S'YM WILL BIDE HIS TIME.
HE'S COME A LONG WAY FOR YOU, ILLYANA. HE DOESN'T MIND WAITING A LITTLE LONGER.

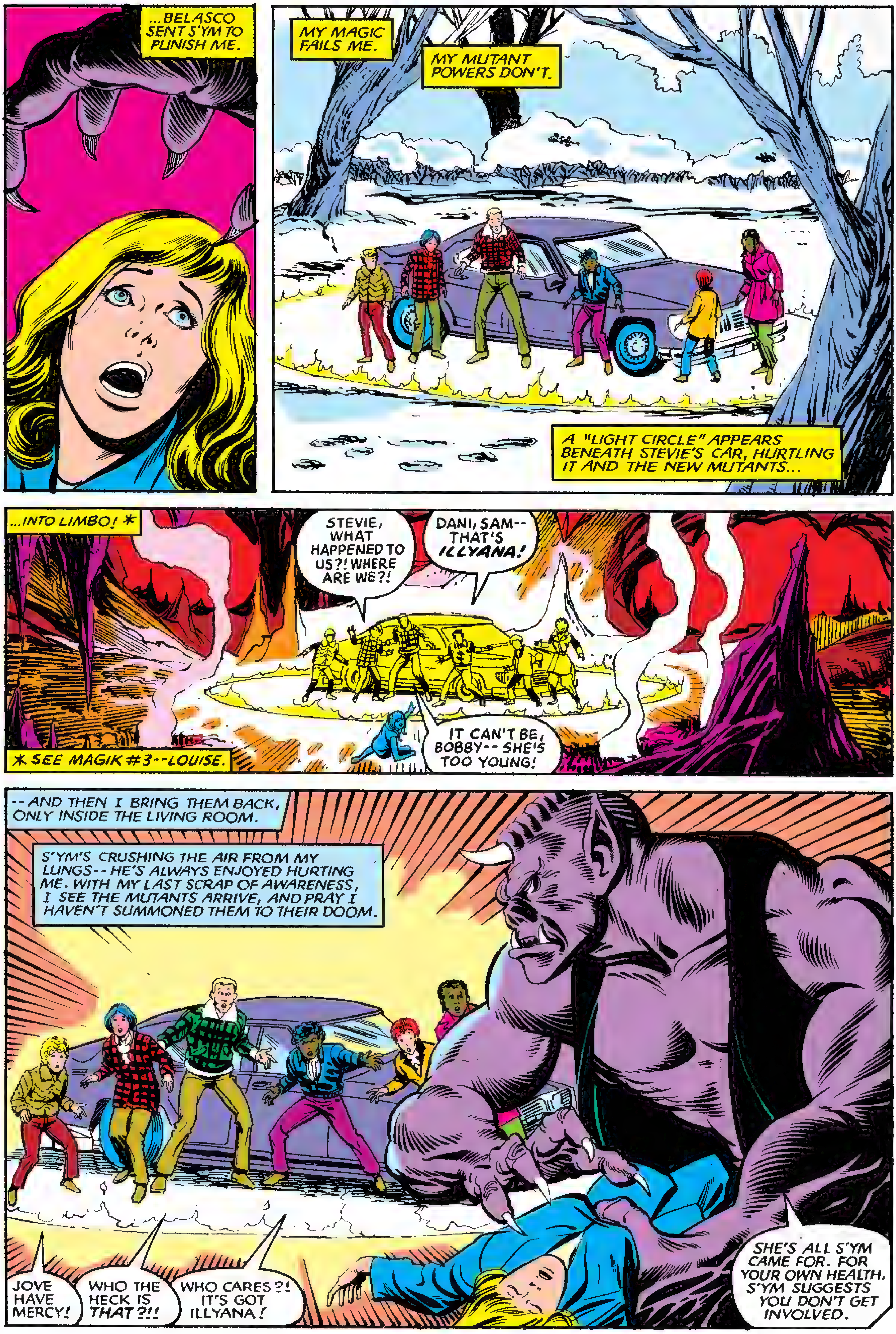

IN SALEM CENTER, THE OTHERS QUICKLY TELL OUR DANCE TEACHER, STEVIE HUNTER, WHAT'S PLANNED AND ASK FOR HER HELP...
Y'SEE, WITH YOUR CAR WE COULD DO A LOT MORE, A LOT FASTER...
SAY NO MORE, DANI--
--COUNT ME IN.
GOOD THING YOU CHOSE THIS WEEK FOR YOUR PARTY, I'LL BE AWAY ON VACATION STARTING THURSDAY.
HI, DOUG!
SORRY I MISSED CLASS, STEVIE. YOU SEEN KITTY ANYWHERE?
'FRAID NOT. CAN I GIVE HER A MESSAGE?
ONLY THAT I NEED TO TALK TO HER.
IT'S REAL IMPORTANT. SEEYA!
I WONDER WHAT DOUG RAMSEY WANTED?
WHO CARES, RAHNE? IT'S NO CONCERN OF OURS.
OCH, 'BERTO-- HOWEVER WILL WE ALL FIT INTO STEVIE'S WEE CAR?
VERY CAREFULLY, KIDDO.
WITH A GREAT MANY GIGGLES--
--PLUS AN OCCASIONAL YELP AS THE SAAB BOUNCES OVER A POTHOLE--
--WE MAKE OUR WAY TO NEARBY SALEM MALL.
EVIDENTLY, MY COMPANIONS HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
THEY'RE STILL REBUILDIN'?! WHEN WE FOUGHT THE SENTINELS, I DIDN'T FIGURE WE DID SO MUCH DAMAGE.*
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, SAM. WE HAVEN'T SEEN THOSE MUTANT-HUNTING ROBOTS SINCE.
I WONDER WHY?
*NM #2--L.

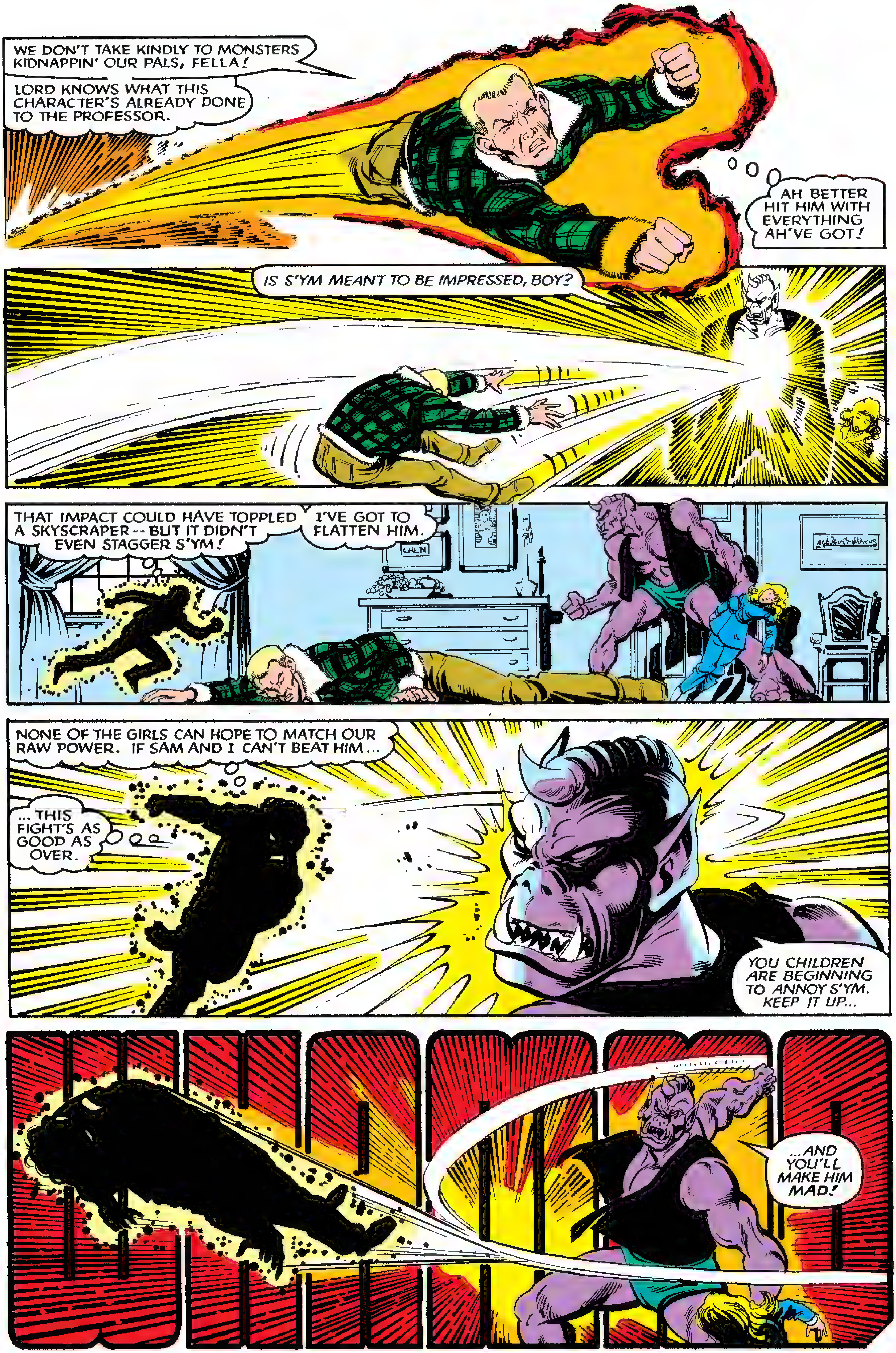

I WISH THE OTHERS' MOOD WAS INFECTIOUS -- BUT MY MIND IS TOO FULL OF MEMORIES OF WHAT WAS, FEARS OF WHAT MAY YET BE. I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME.
I JUST REALIZED, ISN'T TODAY YOUR BIRTHDAY, ILLYANA?
YES.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US SOONER?! IF NOT FOR THIS CRAZY PARTY, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANY CELEBRATION AT ALL!
I DON'T MIND.
THAT'S A PRETTY HEAVY LOAD, SAM.
NO PROBLEM, MISS HUNTER. AH CAN HANDLE IT FINE -- AN' MORE BESIDES.
HEY, RAHNE, WATCH IT?! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', GIRL?!
OWW!!
SAM GUTHRIE, IF YOU WERE CARRYIN' LESS -- AN' NOT TRYIN' SO HARD TO SHOW OFF -- YOU'D BE ABLE T' SEE WHERE YOU WERE GOIN'!
Ah... I'M SORRY, RAHNE. YOU OKAY?
DOES IT MATTER?
RAHNEY! LONG TIME, NO SEE -- HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
H'LO, DIANA, IT'S BEEN AGES! YOU LOOK VERRA WELL.
NO COMPLAINTS. WHO'S THE NEW FACE?
A CLASSMATE.
AMARA, THESE ARE DIANA AND TONY, FRIENDS OF OURS FROM HERE IN TOWN.
WHERE YOU FROM, AMY?
ROME.
NO FOOLIN'? I'VE NEVER BEEN TO THAT PART OF NEW YORK, BUT I HEAR IT'S NICE.

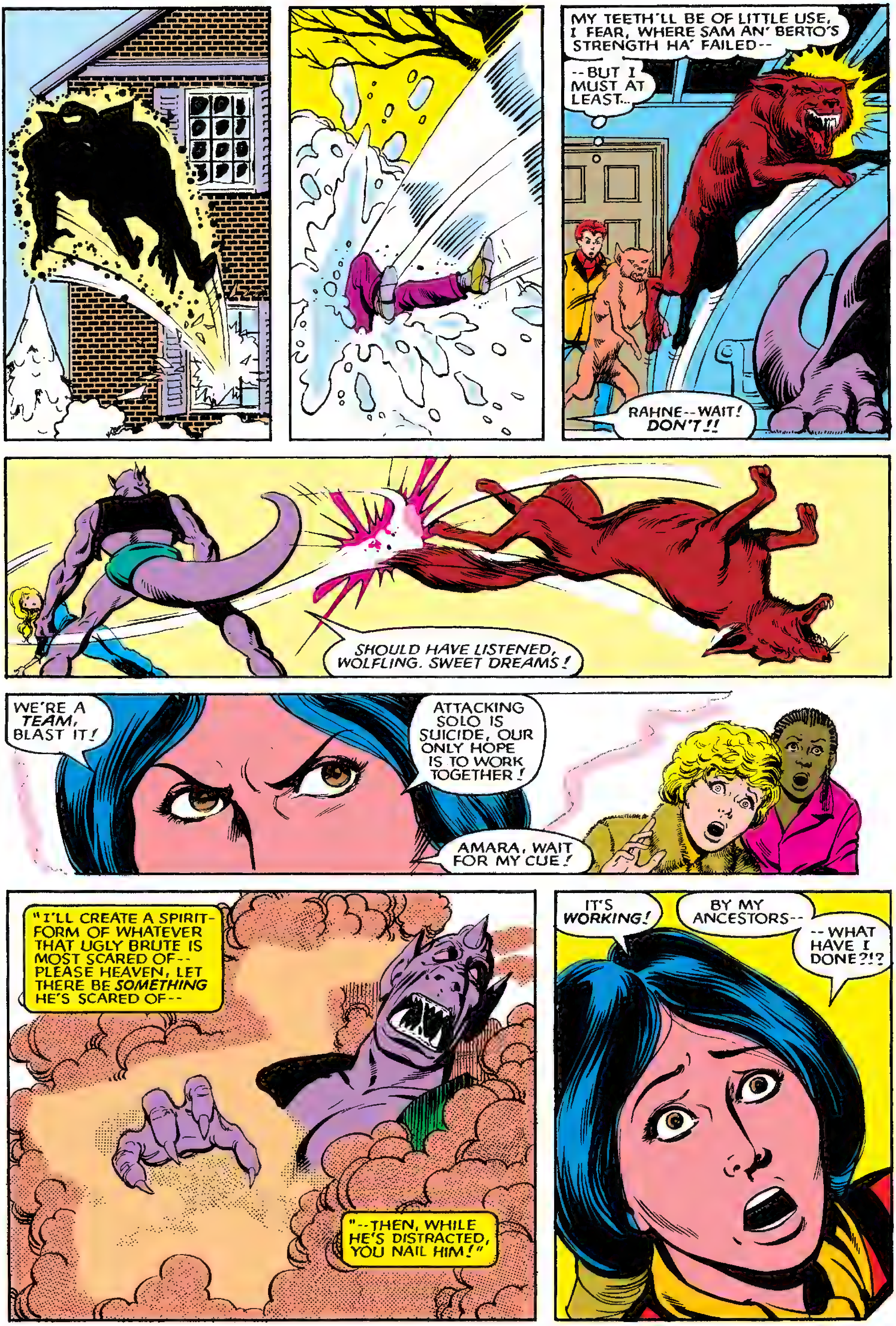

THE MANSION...
FROM THE X-MEN'S ACCOUNT, I BELIEVE ILLYANA'S ABDUCTOR TO BE AN INFAMOUS 13th CENTURY DEMONOLOGIST--BUT MY LIBRARY CONTAINS ONLY VEILED REFERENCES TO BELASCO AND PRECIOUS FEW OF THESE.
NECRONOMICON
MY FRIEND, **STEPHEN STRANGE,** IS A MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.
PERHAPS HE--OR NIGHTCRAWLER'S FOSTER MOTHER, THE GYPSY SORCERESS ***MARGALI SZARDOS***--CAN FILL IN SOME OF THE GAPS--*eh???*
I THOUGHT I SENSED ANOTHER PRESENCE--BUT THE CONTACT WAS SO FLEETING AND FAINT, IT COULD HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION.
IT FELT DIFFERENT FROM THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL SCANNING WAVES THAT SO DEVASTATED ME BEFORE.
NONE OF THE ALARMS HAVE SOUNDED.
*G'DAY, PROF!*
WHAT THE DEVIL--!?!
*YOU GOT IT. NAME'S S'YM. HERE ON BUSINESS.*
S'YM WAS THE DEMON THE X-MEN FOUGHT IN BELASCO'S LIMBO--A CREATURE OF UNBELIEVABLE STRENGTH AND POWERS.
I'M NO MATCH FOR HIM PHYSICALLY.
I'LL TRY TO IMMOBILIZE HIM WITH A MINDBLAST.
UNNGNH!
*S'YM KILLED A FAIR NUMBER OF YOUR PRECIOUS MUTANTS IN HIS TIME, PROF.*
*HE WOULDN'T MIND AT ALL ADDING **YOU** TO THE LIST.*


WE TRY TELEPHONING FROM THE MALL TO SEE IF THE COAST IS CLEAR AT HOME, BUT THERE'S NO REPLY-- EVEN FROM THE ANSWERING MACHINE.
PLACE LOOKS QUIET ENOUGH--HE COULD BE TAKING A NAP AND JUST FORGOT TO FLICK THE "ON" SWITCH.
THE PROFESSOR?! SLEEPIN' IN THE AFTERNOON AN' FORGETTIN' TO DO *ANYTHING?!* C'MON, DANI-- YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING?!
WE CAN'T SIMPLY BARGE IN, GUYS. WE'RE TAKING A BIG ENOUGH RISK COMING THIS CLOSE.
AFTER ALL OUR WORK, IT'D BE A SHAME TO BLOW OUR SURPRISE AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME.
HE CAN'T READ *MY* MIND, DANI. I'LL SCOUT THE GROUNDS. IF HE'S HERE, WE CAN HIDE OUR SUPPLIES IN THE CARRIAGE HOUSE AND MAKE OURSELVES SCARCE...
...UNTIL STEVIE LURES HIM INTO TOWN FOR THE HOUR OR SO WE'LL NEED TO GET READY! THAT'S GREAT, ILLYANA!
SHE'S VERY STRANGE, ROBERTO. IS SHE A MUTANT, LIKE YOU?
WE DON'T KNOW. HER BROTHER IS.
SHE REMINDS ME OF *SELENE*...
...THE DEMON MUTANT WHO PREYED ON MY PEOPLE IN *NOVA ROMA*-- WHO SLEW MY MOTHER AND TRIED TO STEAL DANI'S SOUL. *
ILLYANA ISN'T LIKE THAT, AMARA.
CAN YOU BE CERTAIN, STEVIE? SOMETIMES, EVEN THE X-MEN SEEM AFRAID OF HER.
* SEE NM #'s 9-11 --L.
THEY SPEAK SOFTLY, BUT I HEAR EVERY WORD. I WANT TO HURL THEIR SUSPICIONS BACK IN THEIR FACES-- WHO ARE THEY TO JUDGE ME, HOW *DARE* THEY?!
BUT MY ANGER CANNOT HIDE THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH OF AMARA'S WORDS--
--I HAVE MORE, MUCH MORE, IN COMMON WITH SELENE THAN WITH ANY OF THE NEW MUTANTS.

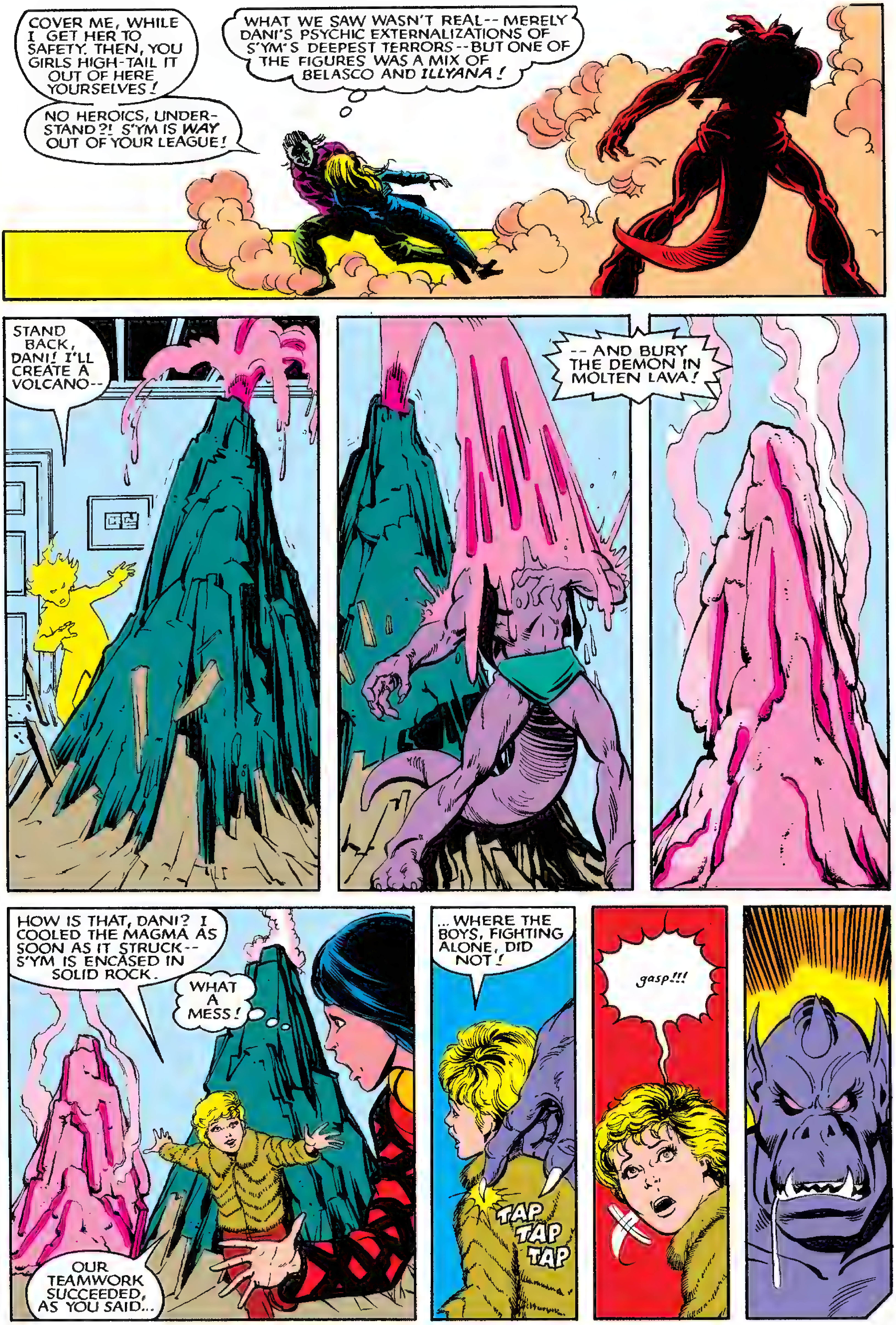

EVERY SO OFTEN, I WONDER IF I SHOULD LEAVE THE PROFESSOR AND THE X-MEN, BEFORE THE EVIL BELASCO PLANTED WITHIN ME...
...CORRUPTS AND DESTROYS THOSE I LOVE AS WELL.
PROFESSOR XAVIER?
OF THEM ALL, ONLY KITTY PRYDE...
...ACCEPTS ME, PURELY AND SIMPLY, AS A FRIEND. WITHOUT QUESTION OR RESERVATION.
IS SHE AWARE OF HOW PRECIOUS A GIFT THAT IS, OF HOW MUCH I VALUE IT?
I COULD LAY THE WORLD AT HER FEET, AND IT WOULDN'T BEGIN TO REPAY HER.
I'VE BEEN THINKING TOO MUCH OF MYSELF-- I SHOULD HAVE NOTICED SOONER, THE HOUSE IS TOO QUIET. SOMETHING FEELS... WRONG.
WE WERE IN SUCH A HAPPY MOOD AS WE DROVE IN, NONE OF US STOPPED TO REALIZE THAT THE PROFESSOR'S SILENCE MIGHT BE DUE TO AN ATTACK. I'D BETTER GET THE OTHERS, WE'LL MAKE A PROPER SEARCH...
S'YM GREETS YOU, DARKCHILD...
...IN THE NAME OF YOUR SOVEREIGN LORD. BELASCO MISSES YOU. HE SENT S'YM TO BRING YOU TO HIM.
NO!!
I KNOW SUCH SPELLS AS WOULD SHRIVEL S'YM TO DUST...
...BUT AT HIS TOUCH, ALL KNOWLEDGE, ALL COURAGE, FLEE. I CAN THINK OF NOTHING, SAVE HOW WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, AND WAS BAD...

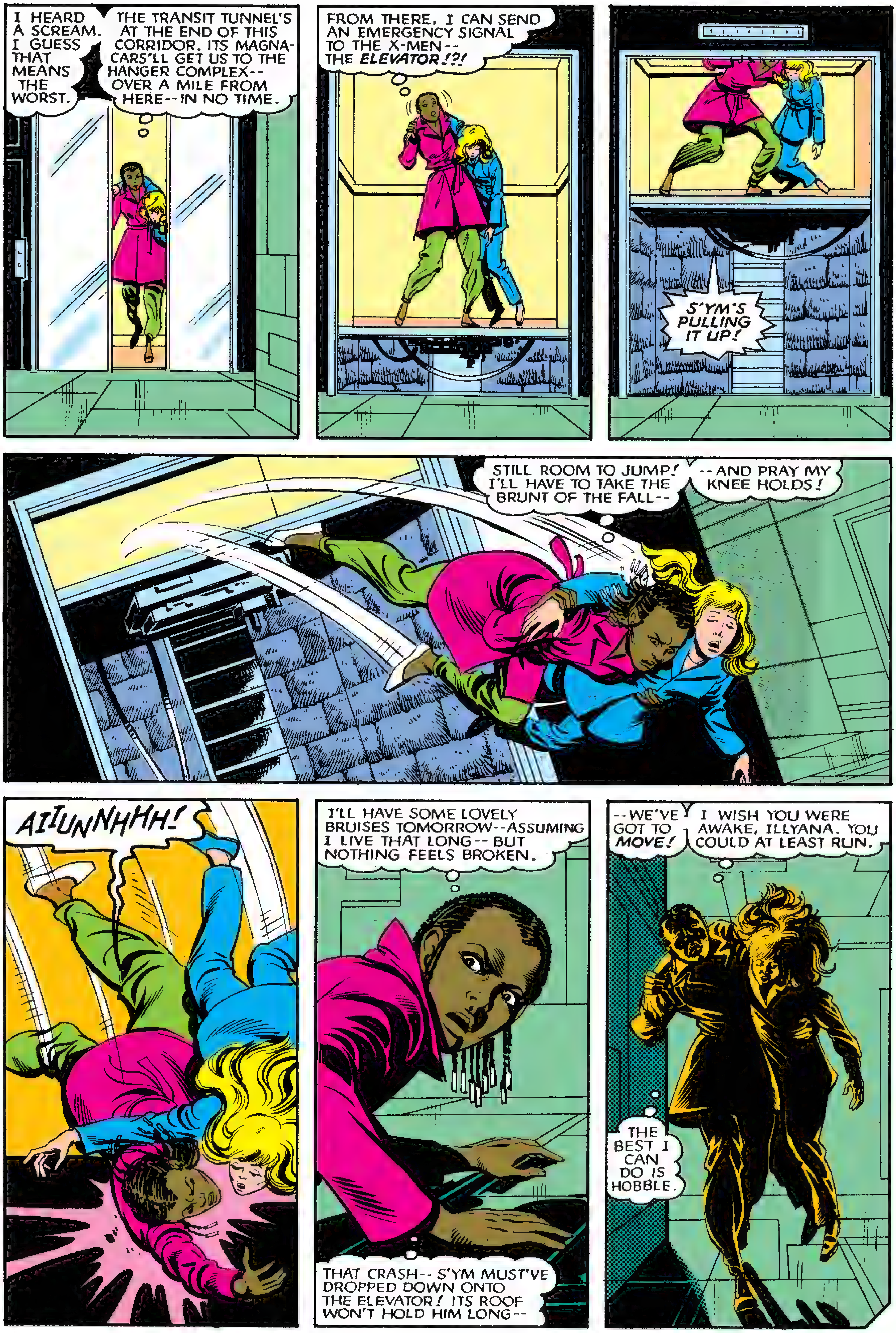

...BELASCO SENT S'YM TO PUNISH ME.
MY MAGIC FAILS ME.
MY MUTANT POWERS DON'T.
A "LIGHT CIRCLE" APPEARS BENEATH STEVIE'S CAR, HURTLING IT AND THE NEW MUTANTS...
...INTO LIMBO! *
STEVIE, WHAT HAPPENED TO US?! WHERE ARE WE?!
DANI, SAM--THAT'S *ILLYANA!*
IT CAN'T BE, BOBBY-- SHE'S TOO YOUNG!
* SEE MAGIK #3--LOUISE.
--AND THEN I BRING THEM BACK, ONLY INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM.
S'YM'S CRUSHING THE AIR FROM MY LUNGS--HE'S ALWAYS ENJOYED HURTING ME. WITH MY LAST SCRAP OF AWARENESS, I SEE THE MUTANTS ARRIVE, AND PRAY I HAVEN'T SUMMONED THEM TO THEIR DOOM.
JOVE HAVE MERCY!
WHO THE HECK IS *THAT?!!*
WHO CARES?! IT'S GOT ILLYANA!
SHE'S ALL S'YM CAME FOR. FOR YOUR OWN HEALTH, S'YM SUGGESTS YOU DON'T GET INVOLVED.

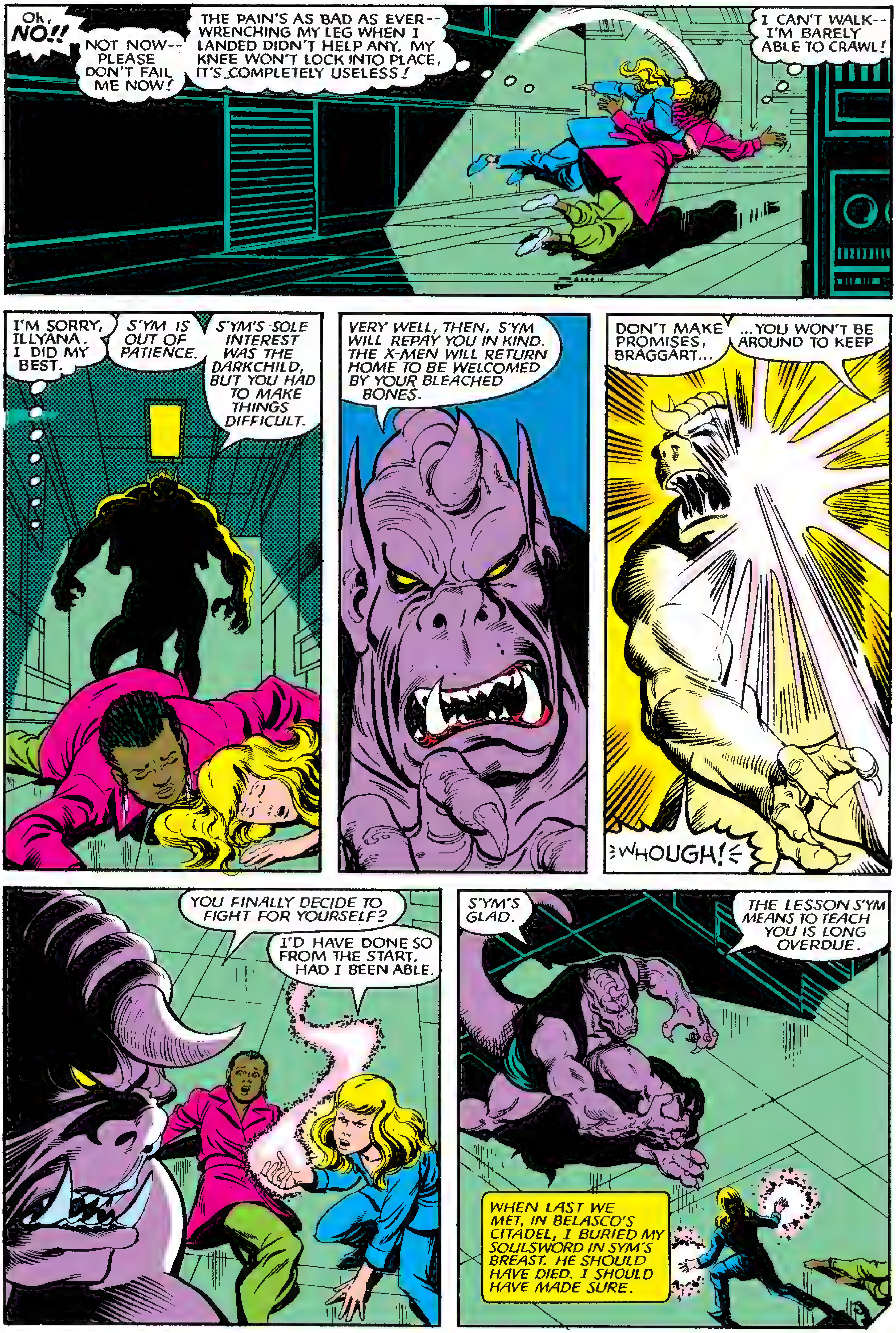

WE DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO MONSTERS KIDNAPPIN' OUR PALS, FELLA!
LORD KNOWS WHAT THIS CHARACTER'S ALREADY DONE TO THE PROFESSOR.
AH BETTER HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING AH'VE GOT!
IS S'YM MEANT TO BE IMPRESSED, BOY?
THAT IMPACT COULD HAVE TOPPLED A SKYSCRAPER -- BUT IT DIDN'T EVEN STAGGER S'YM!
I'VE GOT TO FLATTEN HIM.
NONE OF THE GIRLS CAN HOPE TO MATCH OUR RAW POWER. IF SAM AND I CAN'T BEAT HIM...
...THIS FIGHT'S AS GOOD AS OVER.
YOU CHILDREN ARE BEGINNING TO ANNOY S'YM. KEEP IT UP...
WHAMMO
...AND YOU'LL MAKE HIM MAD!

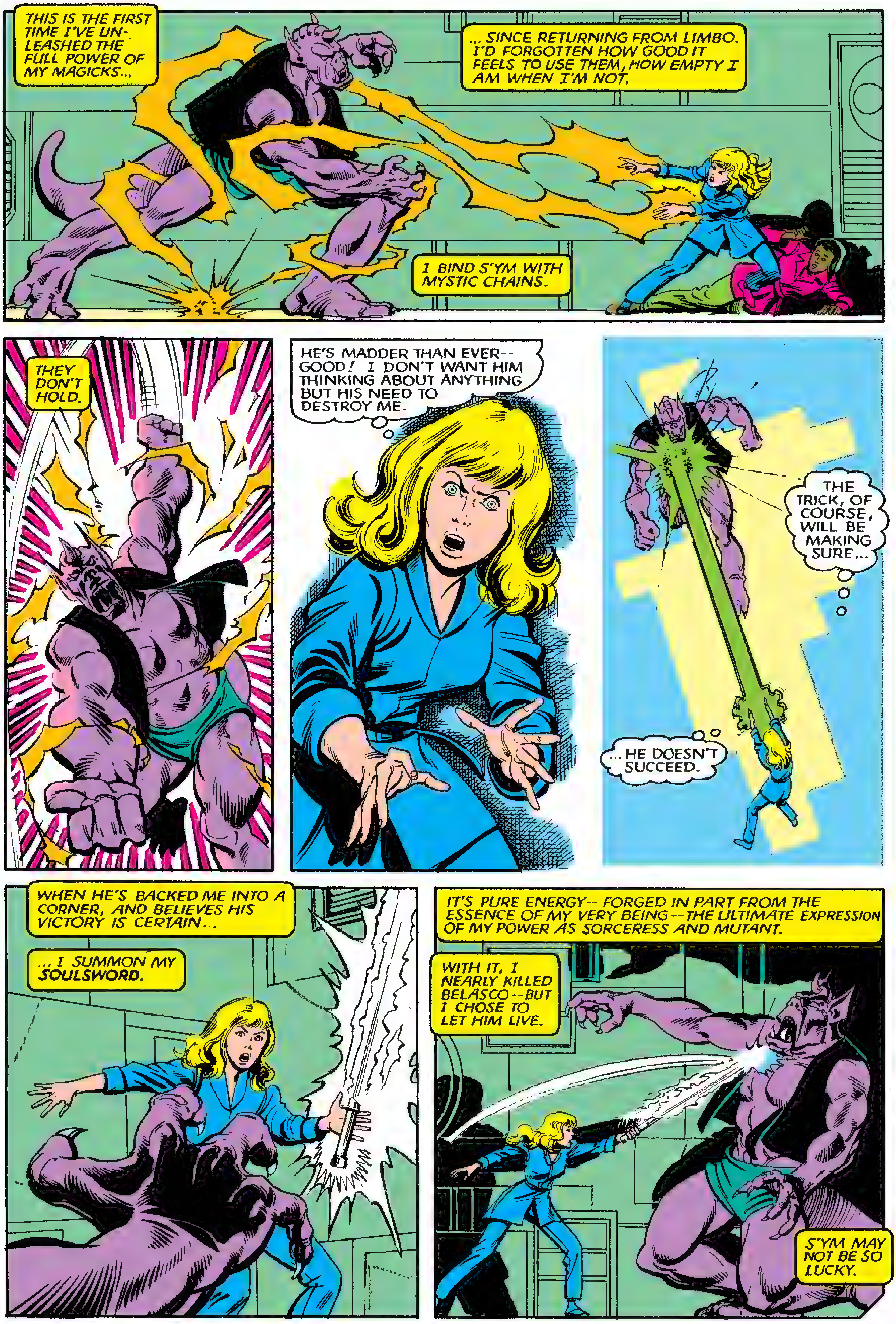

MY TEETH'LL BE OF LITTLE USE, I FEAR, WHERE SAM AN' BERTO'S STRENGTH HA' FAILED--
--BUT I MUST AT LEAST...
RAHNE--WAIT! *DON'T!!*
*SHOULD HAVE LISTENED, WOLFLING. SWEET DREAMS!*
WE'RE A *TEAM*, BLAST IT!
ATTACKING SOLO IS SUICIDE. OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO WORK TOGETHER!
AMARA, WAIT FOR MY CUE!
"I'LL CREATE A SPIRIT-FORM OF WHATEVER THAT UGLY BRUTE IS MOST SCARED OF-- PLEASE HEAVEN, LET THERE BE *SOMETHING* HE'S SCARED OF--
"--THEN, WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED, YOU NAIL HIM!"
IT'S *WORKING!*
BY MY ANCESTORS--
--WHAT HAVE I DONE?!?

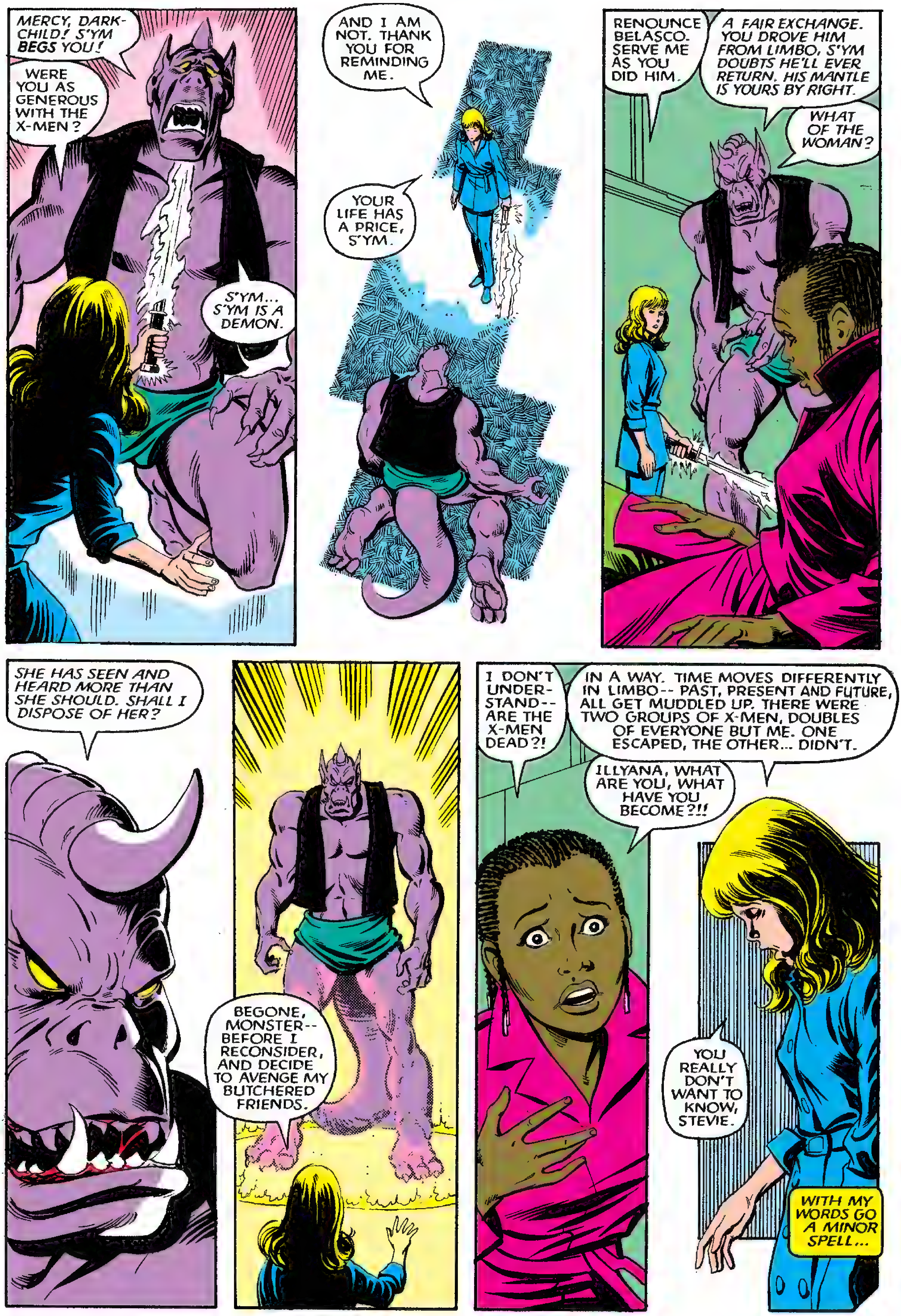
YOU DISAPPOINT ME, S'YM. CAN I NO LONGER DEPEND ON YOU, FOR EVEN THE MOST TRIVIAL OF ERRANDS?
BELASCO!
HAVE MERCY, LORD! S'YM IS OBEDIENT TO YOUR WILL. S'YM IS LOYAL!
HOW SAD, FOR THAT MEANS YOU ARE TRULY DOOMED.
AFTER ALL, IF YOU SERVE THE DARKLORD...
...YOU MUST THEREFORE BE THE SWORN ENEMY OF HIS DARKCHILD.
EITHER WAY MEANS A BETRAYAL, SWEET S'YM.
EITHER BETRAYAL WILL COST YOU MOST DEAR.
ILLYANA! THAT MONSTER DROPPED HER!

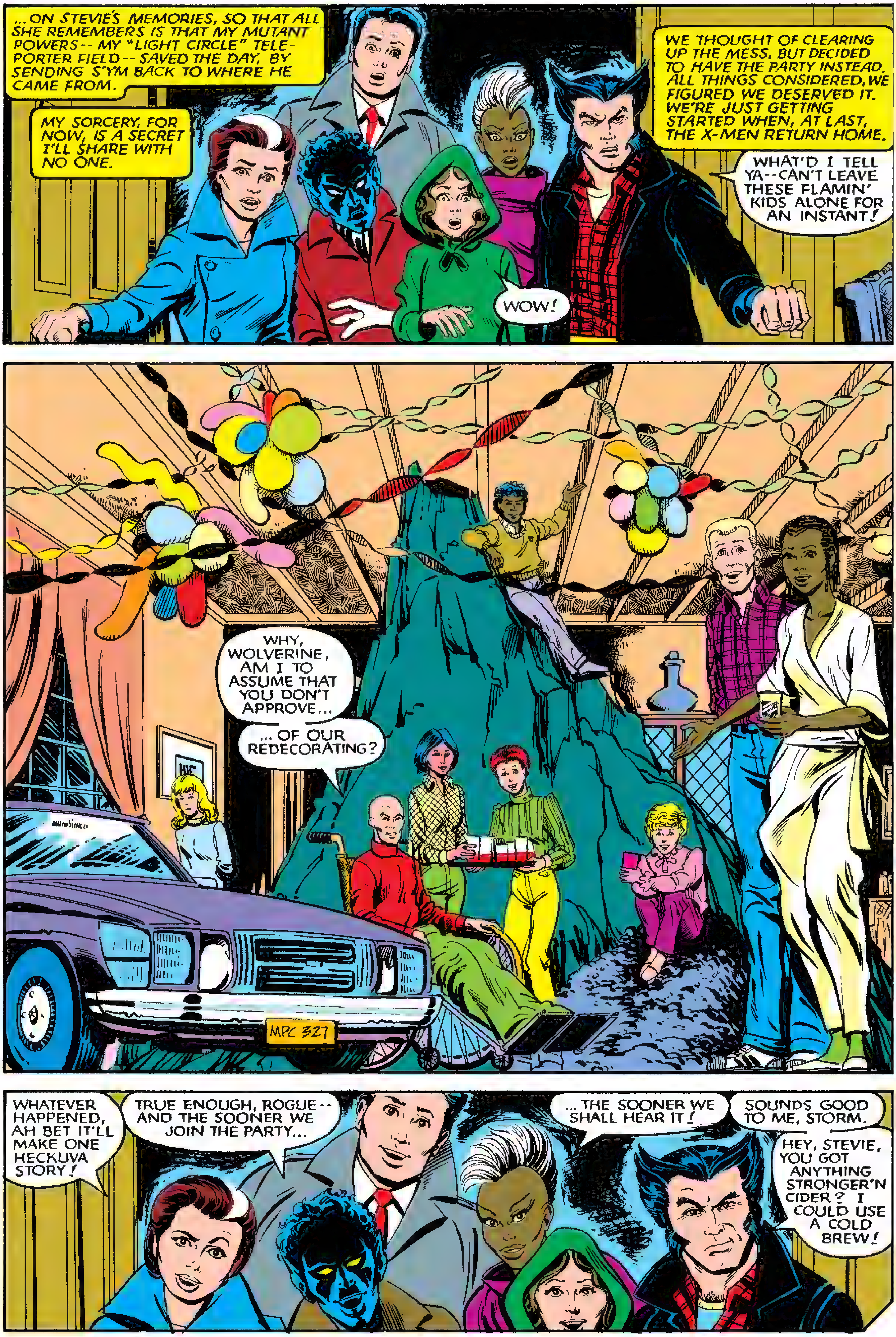

COVER ME, WHILE I GET HER TO SAFETY. THEN, YOU GIRLS HIGH-TAIL IT OUT OF HERE YOURSELVES!
NO HEROICS, UNDERSTAND?! S'YM IS WAY OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE!
WHAT WE SAW WASN'T REAL-- MERELY DANI'S PSYCHIC EXTERNALIZATIONS OF S'YM'S DEEPEST TERRORS--BUT ONE OF THE FIGURES WAS A MIX OF BELASCO AND ILLYANA!
STAND BACK, DANI! I'LL CREATE A VOLCANO--
-- AND BURY THE DEMON IN MOLTEN LAVA!
HOW IS THAT, DANI? I COOLED THE MAGMA AS SOON AS IT STRUCK-- S'YM IS ENCASED IN SOLID ROCK.
WHAT A MESS!
OUR TEAMWORK SUCCEEDED, AS YOU SAID...
...WHERE THE BOYS, FIGHTING ALONE, DID NOT!
TAP TAP TAP
gasp!!!

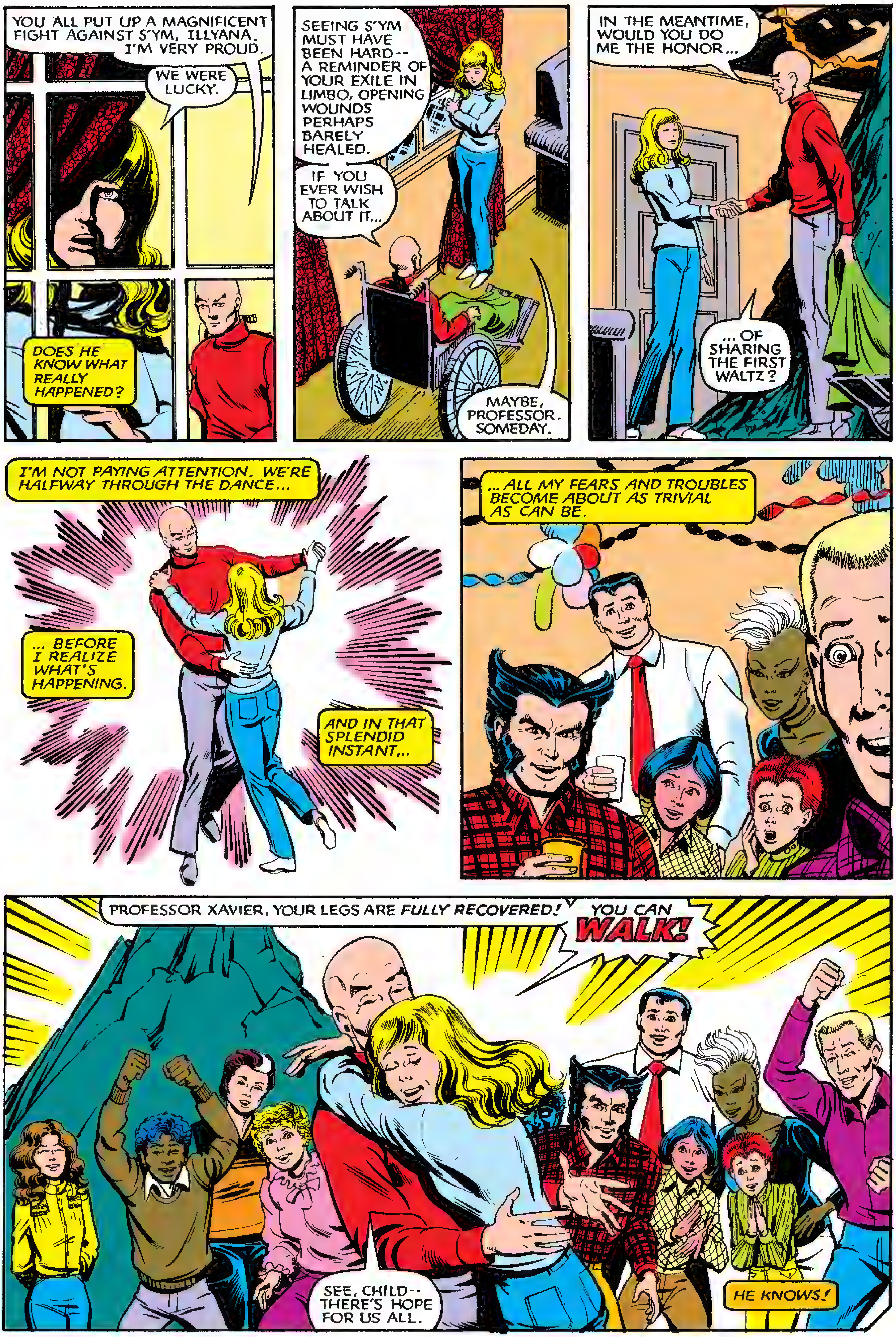

I HEARD A SCREAM. I GUESS THAT MEANS THE WORST.
THE TRANSIT TUNNEL'S AT THE END OF THIS CORRIDOR. ITS MAGNA-CARS'LL GET US TO THE HANGER COMPLEX-- OVER A MILE FROM HERE--IN NO TIME.
FROM THERE, I CAN SEND AN EMERGENCY SIGNAL TO THE X-MEN-- THE *ELEVATOR!?!*
S'YM'S PULLING IT UP!
STILL ROOM TO JUMP! I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE BRUNT OF THE FALL--
--AND PRAY MY KNEE HOLDS!
AIIUNNHHH!
I'LL HAVE SOME LOVELY BRUISES TOMORROW--ASSUMING I LIVE THAT LONG-- BUT NOTHING FEELS BROKEN.
THAT CRASH-- S'YM MUST'VE DROPPED DOWN ONTO THE ELEVATOR! ITS ROOF WON'T HOLD HIM LONG--
--WE'VE GOT TO *MOVE!*
I WISH YOU WERE AWAKE, ILLYANA. YOU COULD AT LEAST RUN.
THE BEST I CAN DO IS HOBBLE.

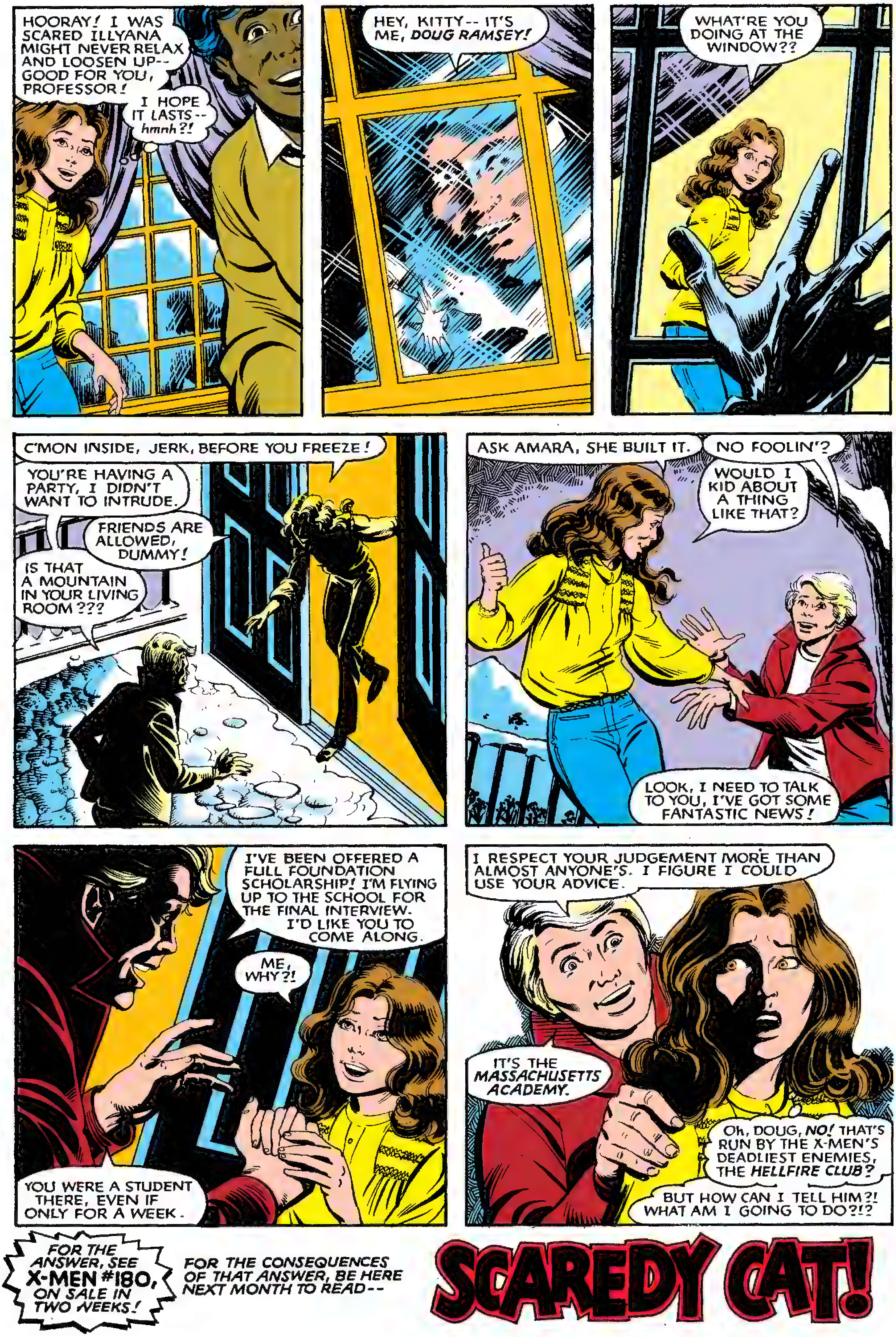

Oh, NO!!
NOT NOW-- PLEASE DON'T FAIL ME NOW!
THE PAIN'S AS BAD AS EVER-- WRENCHING MY LEG WHEN I LANDED DIDN'T HELP ANY. MY KNEE WON'T LOCK INTO PLACE, IT'S COMPLETELY USELESS!
I CAN'T WALK-- I'M BARELY ABLE TO CRAWL!
I'M SORRY, ILLYANA. I DID MY BEST.
S'YM IS OUT OF PATIENCE.
S'YM'S SOLE INTEREST WAS THE DARKCHILD, BUT YOU HAD TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT.
VERY WELL, THEN. S'YM WILL REPAY YOU IN KIND. THE X-MEN WILL RETURN HOME TO BE WELCOMED BY YOUR BLEACHED BONES.
DON'T MAKE PROMISES, BRAGGART...
...YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO KEEP
WHOUGH!
YOU FINALLY DECIDE TO FIGHT FOR YOURSELF?
I'D HAVE DONE SO FROM THE START, HAD I BEEN ABLE.
S'YM'S GLAD.
THE LESSON S'YM MEANS TO TEACH YOU IS LONG OVERDUE.
WHEN LAST WE MET, IN BELASCO'S CITADEL, I BURIED MY SOULSWORD IN SYM'S BREAST. HE SHOULD HAVE DIED. I SHOULD HAVE MADE SURE.


THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE UNLEASHED THE FULL POWER OF MY MAGICKS...
... SINCE RETURNING FROM LIMBO. I'D FORGOTTEN HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO USE THEM, HOW EMPTY I AM WHEN I'M NOT.
I BIND S'YM WITH MYSTIC CHAINS.
THEY DON'T HOLD.
HE'S MADDER THAN EVER-- GOOD! I DON'T WANT HIM THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING BUT HIS NEED TO DESTROY ME.
THE TRICK, OF COURSE, WILL BE MAKING SURE...
... HE DOESN'T SUCCEED.
WHEN HE'S BACKED ME INTO A CORNER, AND BELIEVES HIS VICTORY IS CERTAIN...
... I SUMMON MY SOULSWORD.
IT'S PURE ENERGY-- FORGED IN PART FROM THE ESSENCE OF MY VERY BEING--THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF MY POWER AS SORCERESS AND MUTANT.
WITH IT, I NEARLY KILLED BELASCO--BUT I CHOSE TO LET HIM LIVE.
S'YM MAY NOT BE SO LUCKY.

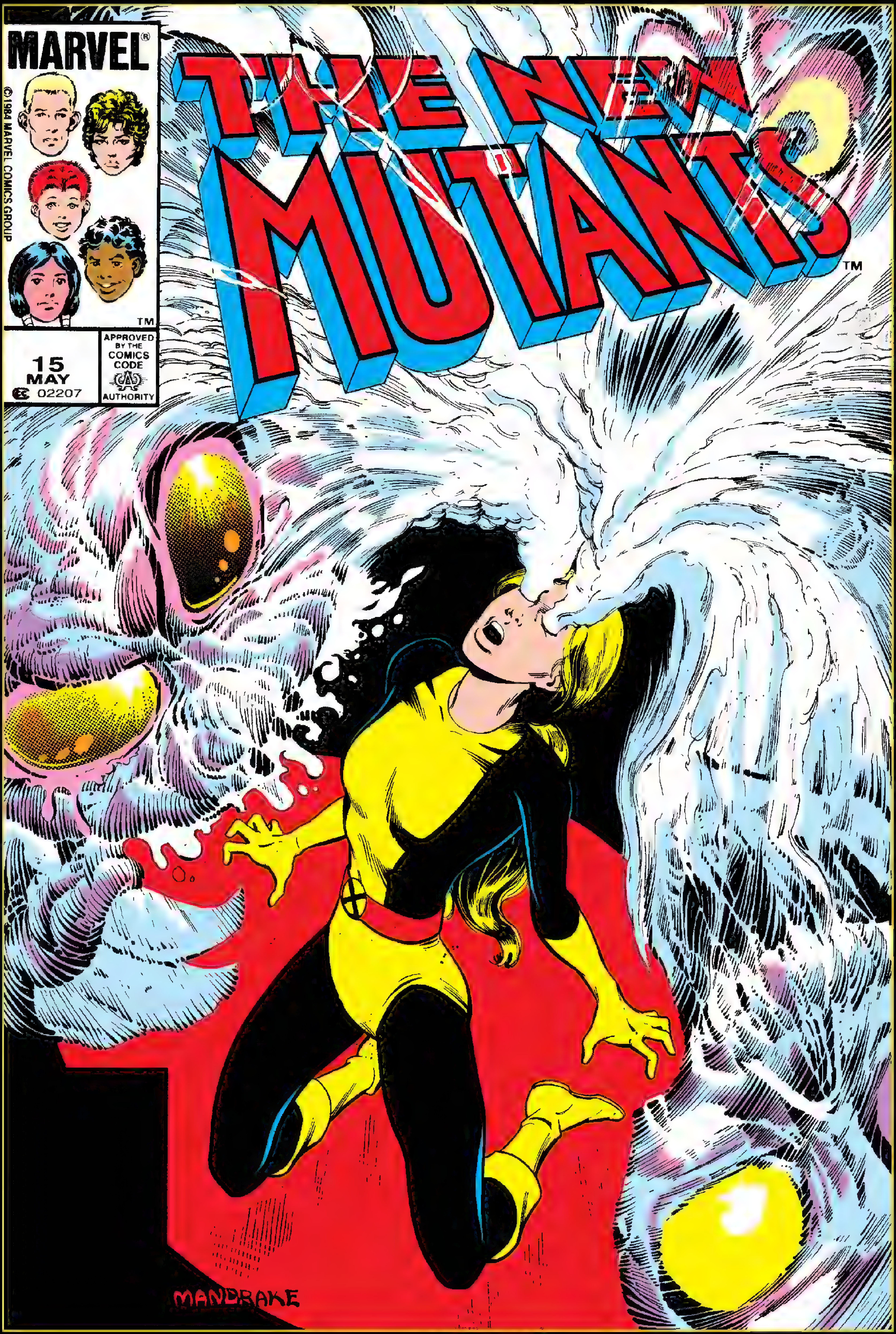

MERCY, DARK-CHILD! S'YM BEGS YOU!
WERE YOU AS GENEROUS WITH THE X-MEN?
S'YM... S'YM IS A DEMON.
AND I AM NOT. THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME.
YOUR LIFE HAS A PRICE, S'YM.
RENOUNCE BELASCO. SERVE ME AS YOU DID HIM.
A FAIR EXCHANGE. YOU DROVE HIM FROM LIMBO; S'YM DOUBTS HE'LL EVER RETURN. HIS MANTLE IS YOURS BY RIGHT.
WHAT OF THE WOMAN?
SHE HAS SEEN AND HEARD MORE THAN SHE SHOULD. SHALL I DISPOSE OF HER?
BEGONE, MONSTER-- BEFORE I RECONSIDER, AND DECIDE TO AVENGE MY BUTCHERED FRIENDS.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- ARE THE X-MEN DEAD?!
IN A WAY. TIME MOVES DIFFERENTLY IN LIMBO-- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, ALL GET MUDDLED UP. THERE WERE TWO GROUPS OF X-MEN, DOUBLES OF EVERYONE BUT ME. ONE ESCAPED, THE OTHER... DIDN'T.
ILLYANA, WHAT ARE YOU, WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?!!
YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW, STEVIE.
WITH MY WORDS GO A MINOR SPELL...


...ON STEVIE'S MEMORIES, SO THAT ALL SHE REMEMBERS IS THAT MY MUTANT POWERS -- MY "LIGHT CIRCLE" TELEPORTER FIELD -- SAVED THE DAY, BY SENDING S'YM BACK TO WHERE HE CAME FROM.
MY SORCERY, FOR NOW, IS A SECRET I'LL SHARE WITH NO ONE.
WE THOUGHT OF CLEARING UP THE MESS, BUT DECIDED TO HAVE THE PARTY INSTEAD. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, WE FIGURED WE DESERVED IT. WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED WHEN, AT LAST, THE X-MEN RETURN HOME.
WHAT'D I TELL YA -- CAN'T LEAVE THESE FLAMIN' KIDS ALONE FOR AN INSTANT!
WOW!
WHY, WOLVERINE, AM I TO ASSUME THAT YOU DON'T APPROVE...
...OF OUR REDECORATING?
MPC 327
WHATEVER HAPPENED, AH BET IT'LL MAKE ONE HECKUVA STORY!
TRUE ENOUGH, ROGUE -- AND THE SOONER WE JOIN THE PARTY...
...THE SOONER WE SHALL HEAR IT!
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, STORM.
HEY, STEVIE, YOU GOT ANYTHING STRONGER'N CIDER? I COULD USE A COLD BREW!


YOU ALL PUT UP A MAGNIFICENT FIGHT AGAINST S'YM, ILLYANA. I'M VERY PROUD.
WE WERE LUCKY.
DOES HE KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?
SEEING S'YM MUST HAVE BEEN HARD-- A REMINDER OF YOUR EXILE IN LIMBO, OPENING WOUNDS PERHAPS BARELY HEALED.
IF YOU EVER WISH TO TALK ABOUT IT...
MAYBE, PROFESSOR. SOMEDAY.
IN THE MEANTIME, WOULD YOU DO ME THE HONOR...
... OF SHARING THE FIRST WALTZ?
I'M NOT PAYING ATTENTION. WE'RE HALFWAY THROUGH THE DANCE...
... BEFORE I REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING.
AND IN THAT SPLENDID INSTANT...
... ALL MY FEARS AND TROUBLES BECOME ABOUT AS TRIVIAL AS CAN BE.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, YOUR LEGS ARE FULLY RECOVERED! YOU CAN WALK!
SEE, CHILD-- THERE'S HOPE FOR US ALL.
HE KNOWS!


HOORAY! I WAS SCARED ILLYANA MIGHT NEVER RELAX AND LOOSEN UP-- GOOD FOR YOU, PROFESSOR!
I HOPE IT LASTS-- *hmnh?!*
HEY, KITTY-- IT'S ME, ***DOUG RAMSEY!***
WHAT'RE YOU DOING AT THE WINDOW??
C'MON INSIDE, JERK, BEFORE YOU FREEZE!
YOU'RE HAVING A PARTY, I DIDN'T WANT TO INTRUDE.
FRIENDS ARE ALLOWED, DUMMY!
IS THAT A MOUNTAIN IN YOUR LIVING ROOM???
ASK AMARA, SHE BUILT IT.
NO FOOLIN'?
WOULD I KID ABOUT A THING LIKE THAT?
LOOK, I NEED TO TALK TO YOU, I'VE GOT SOME FANTASTIC NEWS!
I'VE BEEN OFFERED A FULL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP! I'M FLYING UP TO THE SCHOOL FOR THE FINAL INTERVIEW. I'D LIKE YOU TO COME ALONG.
ME, WHY?!
YOU WERE A STUDENT THERE, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A WEEK.
I RESPECT YOUR JUDGEMENT MORE THAN ALMOST ANYONE'S. I FIGURE I COULD USE YOUR ADVICE.
IT'S THE *MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY.*
Oh, DOUG, ***NO!*** THAT'S RUN BY THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST ENEMIES, THE ***HELLFIRE CLUB?***
BUT HOW CAN I TELL HIM?! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!?
*FOR THE ANSWER, SEE* **X-MEN #180,** *ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!*
*FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ANSWER, BE HERE NEXT MONTH TO READ--*
SCAREDY CAT!

IN *UNCANNY X-MEN #180*, PROFESSOR X REVEALED THAT DOUG RAMSEY WAS A MUTANT WITH LANGUAGE TRANSLATION POWERS. KITTY DECIDED TO ACCOMPANY DOUG TO THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY — BUT THE INVITATION PROVED TO BE A TRAP, AND THE WHITE QUEEN CAPTURED THEM BOTH.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THE NEW MUTANTS™
MANDRAKE

**Stan Lee** PRESENTOR

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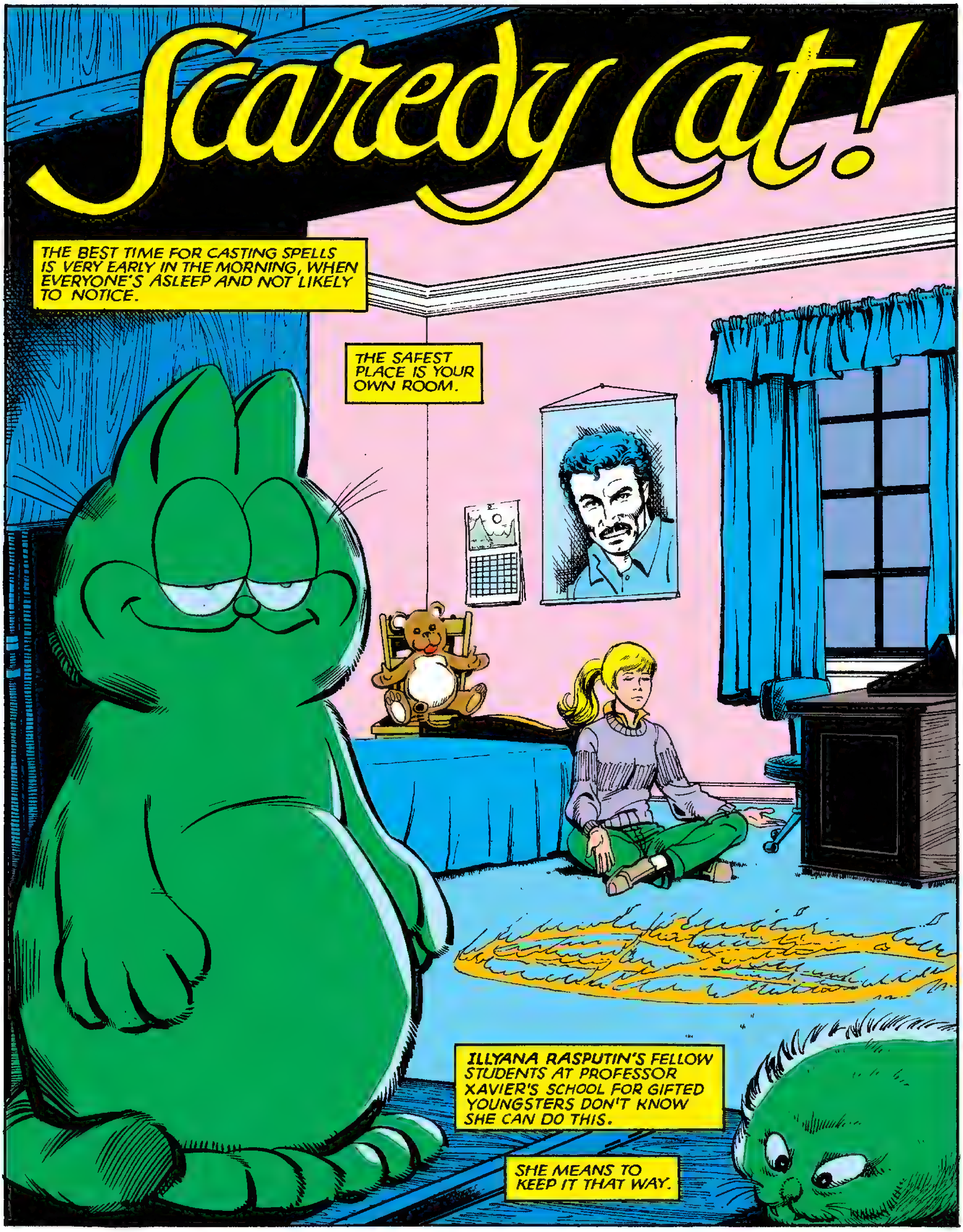
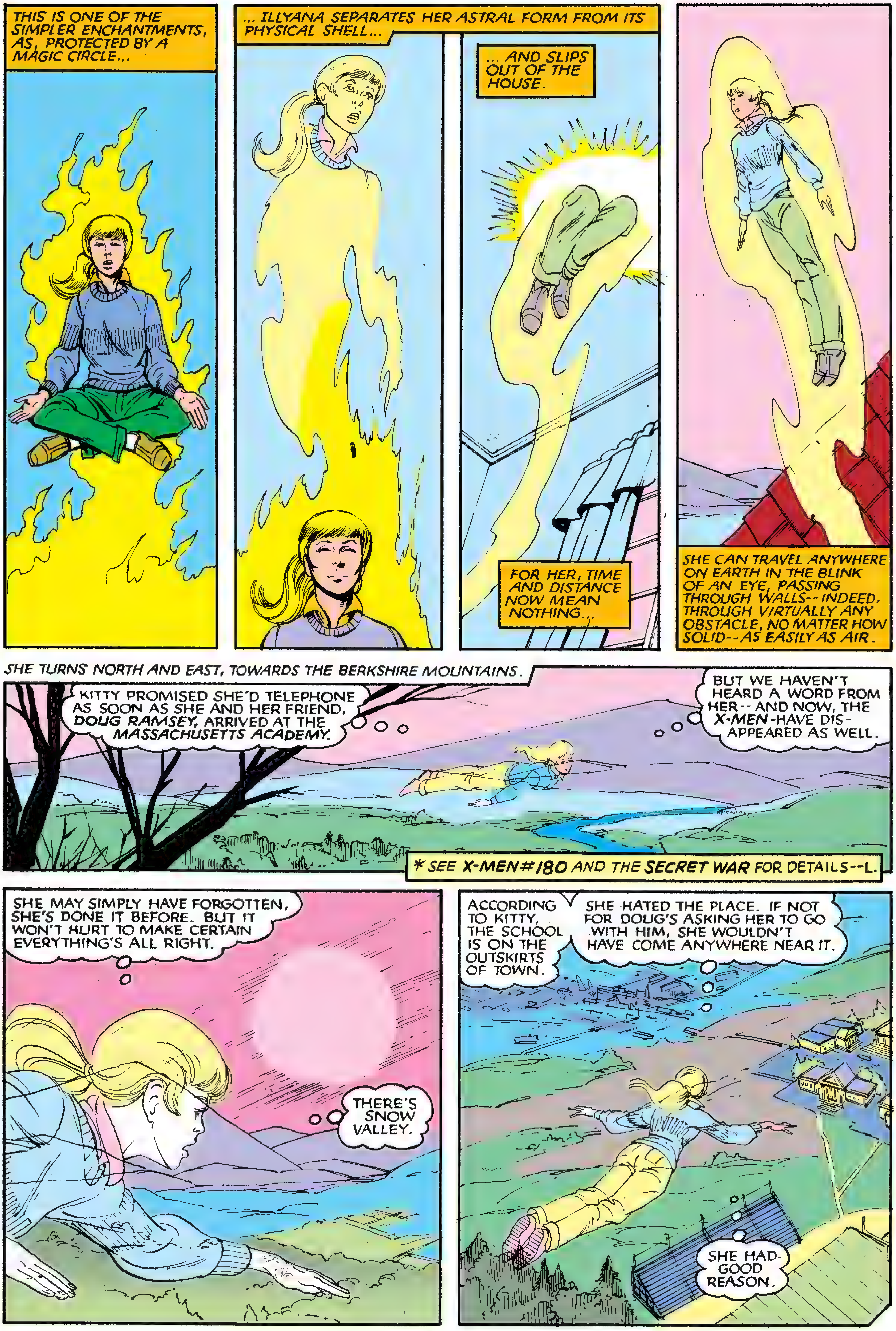
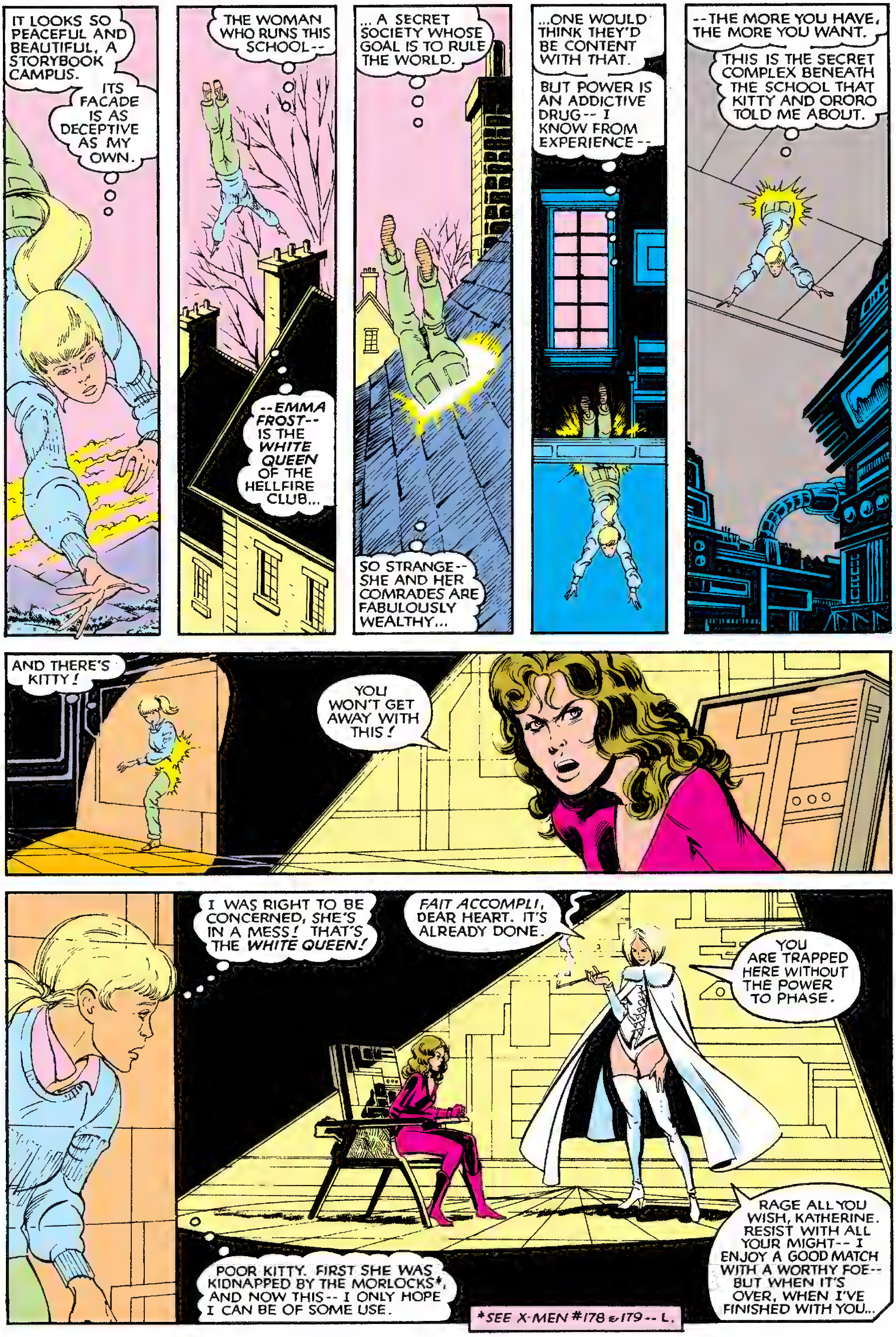
SAL BUSCEMA *penciler*
TOM MANDRAKE *finisher*
TOM ORZECHOWSKI *letterer*
GLYNIS WEIN *colorist*
LOUISE JONES *editor*
JIM SHOOTER *top cat*

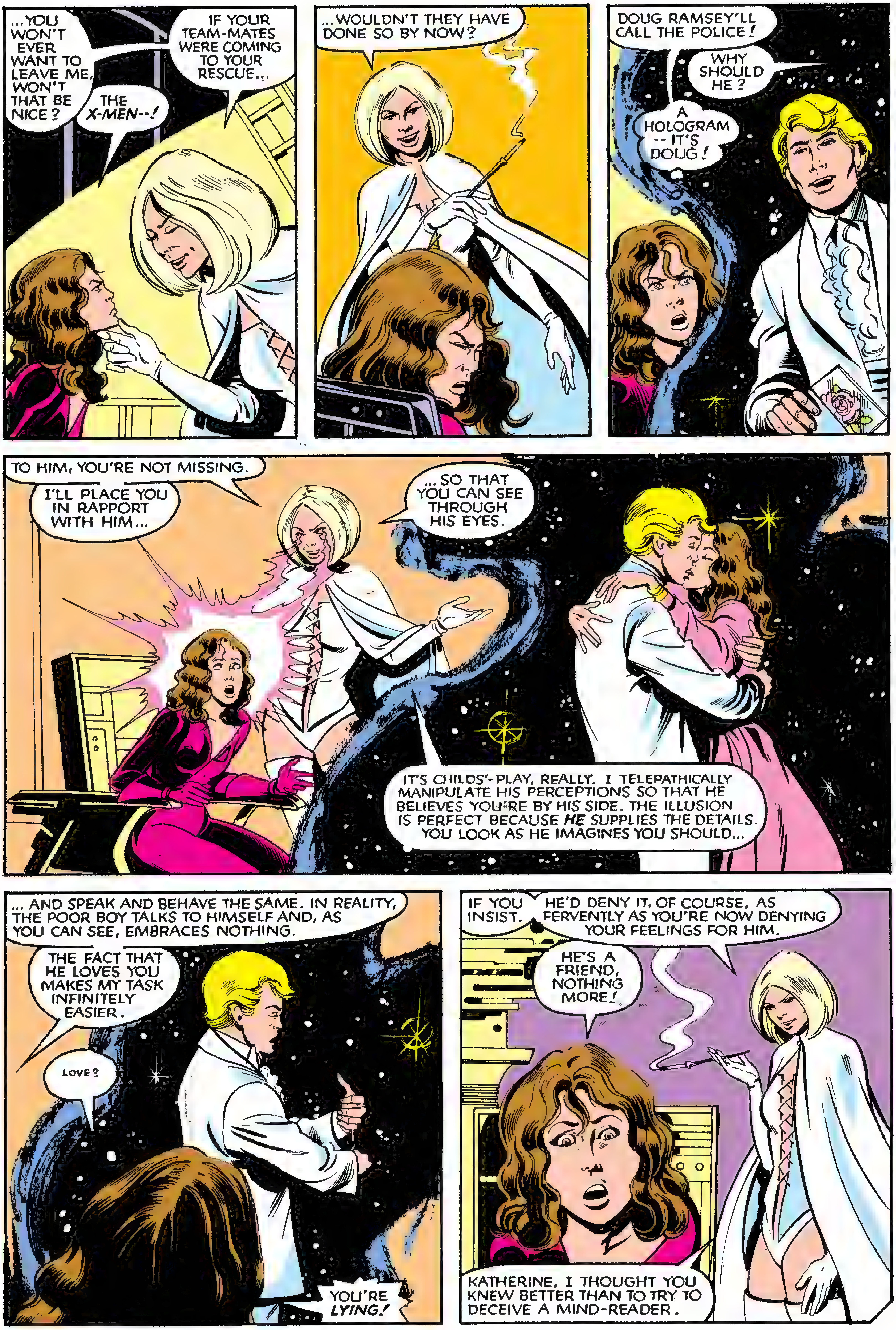
**The New Mutants** STARS

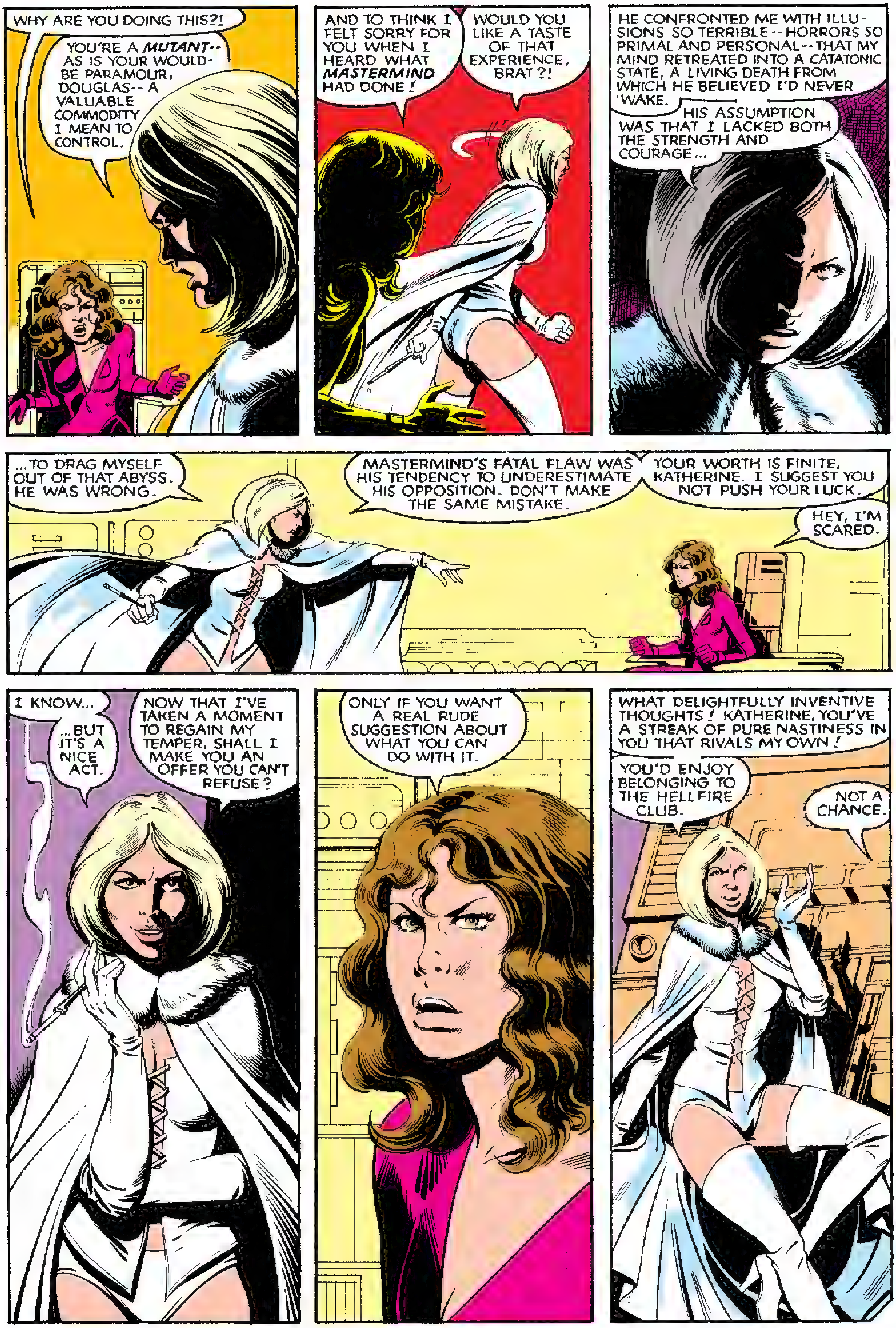
CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

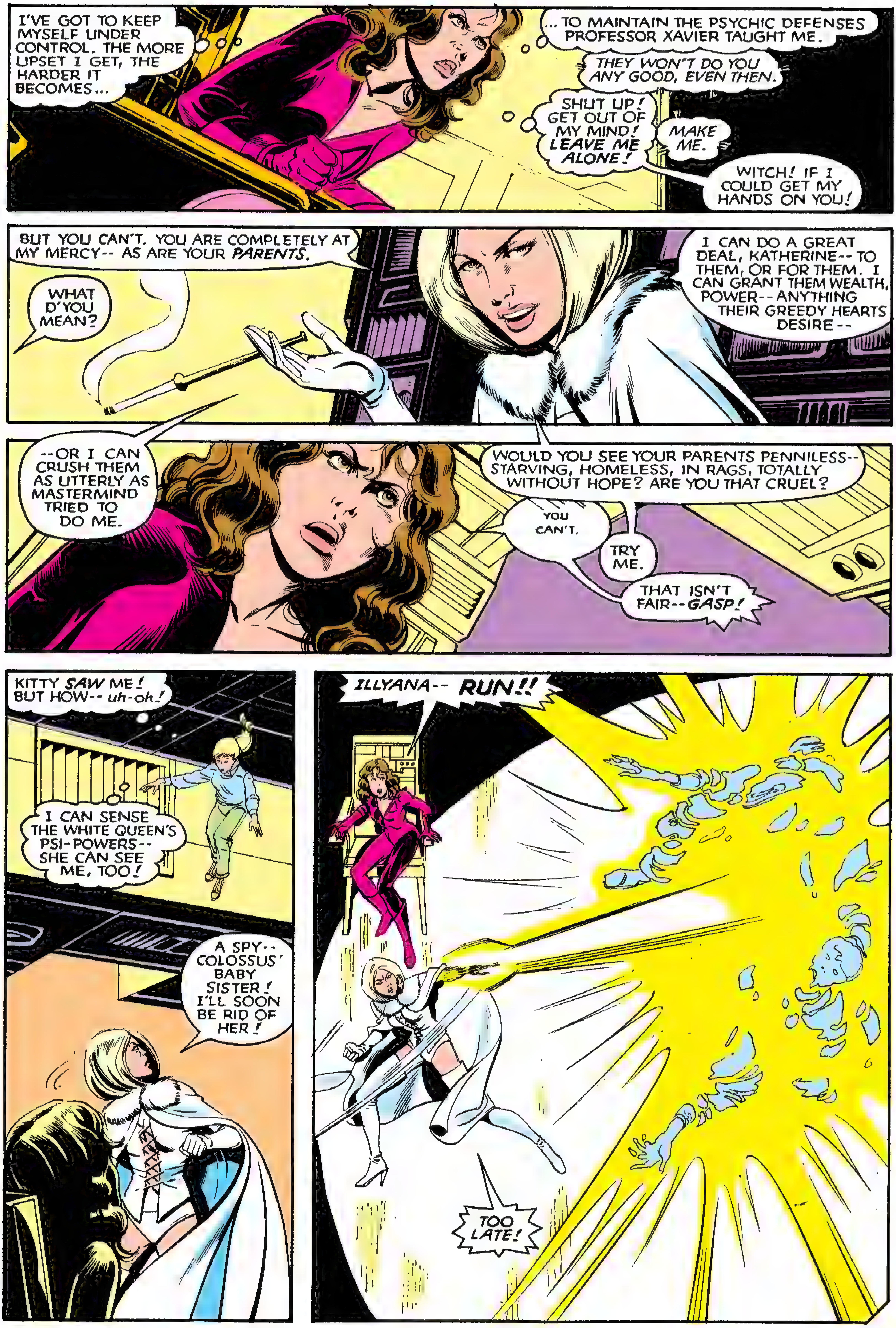

Scaredy Cat!
THE BEST TIME FOR CASTING SPELLS IS VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, WHEN EVERYONE'S ASLEEP AND NOT LIKELY TO NOTICE.
THE SAFEST PLACE IS YOUR OWN ROOM.
ILLYANA RASPUTIN'S FELLOW STUDENTS AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS DON'T KNOW SHE CAN DO THIS.
SHE MEANS TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

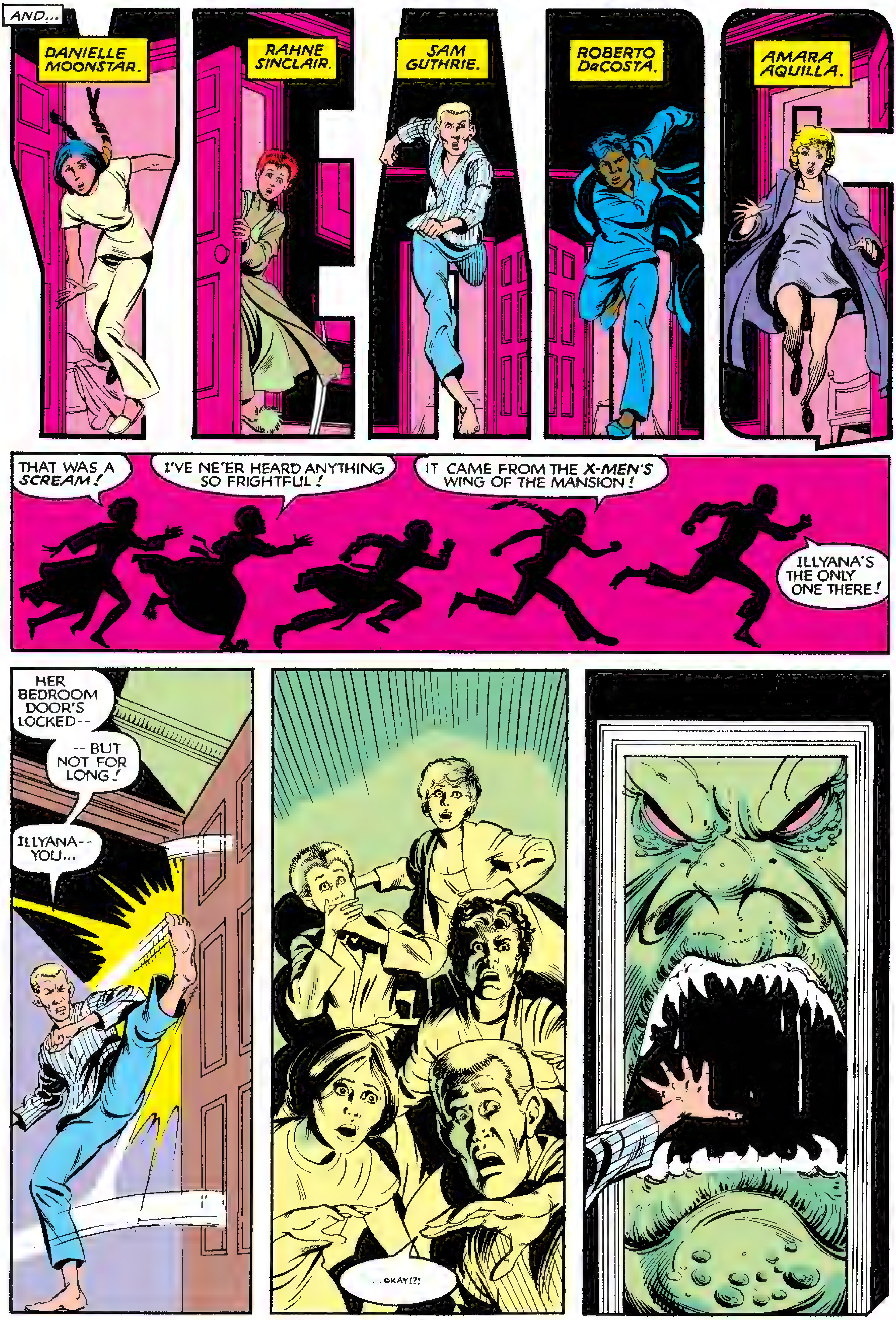

THIS IS ONE OF THE SIMPLER ENCHANTMENTS, AS, PROTECTED BY A MAGIC CIRCLE...
... ILLYANA SEPARATES HER ASTRAL FORM FROM ITS PHYSICAL SHELL...
... AND SLIPS OUT OF THE HOUSE.
FOR HER, TIME AND DISTANCE NOW MEAN NOTHING...
SHE CAN TRAVEL ANYWHERE ON EARTH IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, PASSING THROUGH WALLS-- INDEED, THROUGH VIRTUALLY ANY OBSTACLE, NO MATTER HOW SOLID-- AS EASILY AS AIR.
SHE TURNS NORTH AND EAST, TOWARDS THE BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS.
KITTY PROMISED SHE'D TELEPHONE AS SOON AS SHE AND HER FRIEND, DOUG RAMSEY, ARRIVED AT THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY.
BUT WE HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD FROM HER-- AND NOW, THE X-MEN-HAVE DISAPPEARED AS WELL.
* SEE X-MEN #180 AND THE SECRET WAR FOR DETAILS--L.
SHE MAY SIMPLY HAVE FORGOTTEN, SHE'S DONE IT BEFORE. BUT IT WON'T HURT TO MAKE CERTAIN EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.
THERE'S SNOW VALLEY.
ACCORDING TO KITTY, THE SCHOOL IS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN.
SHE HATED THE PLACE. IF NOT FOR DOUG'S ASKING HER TO GO WITH HIM, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE COME ANYWHERE NEAR IT.
SHE HAD GOOD REASON.

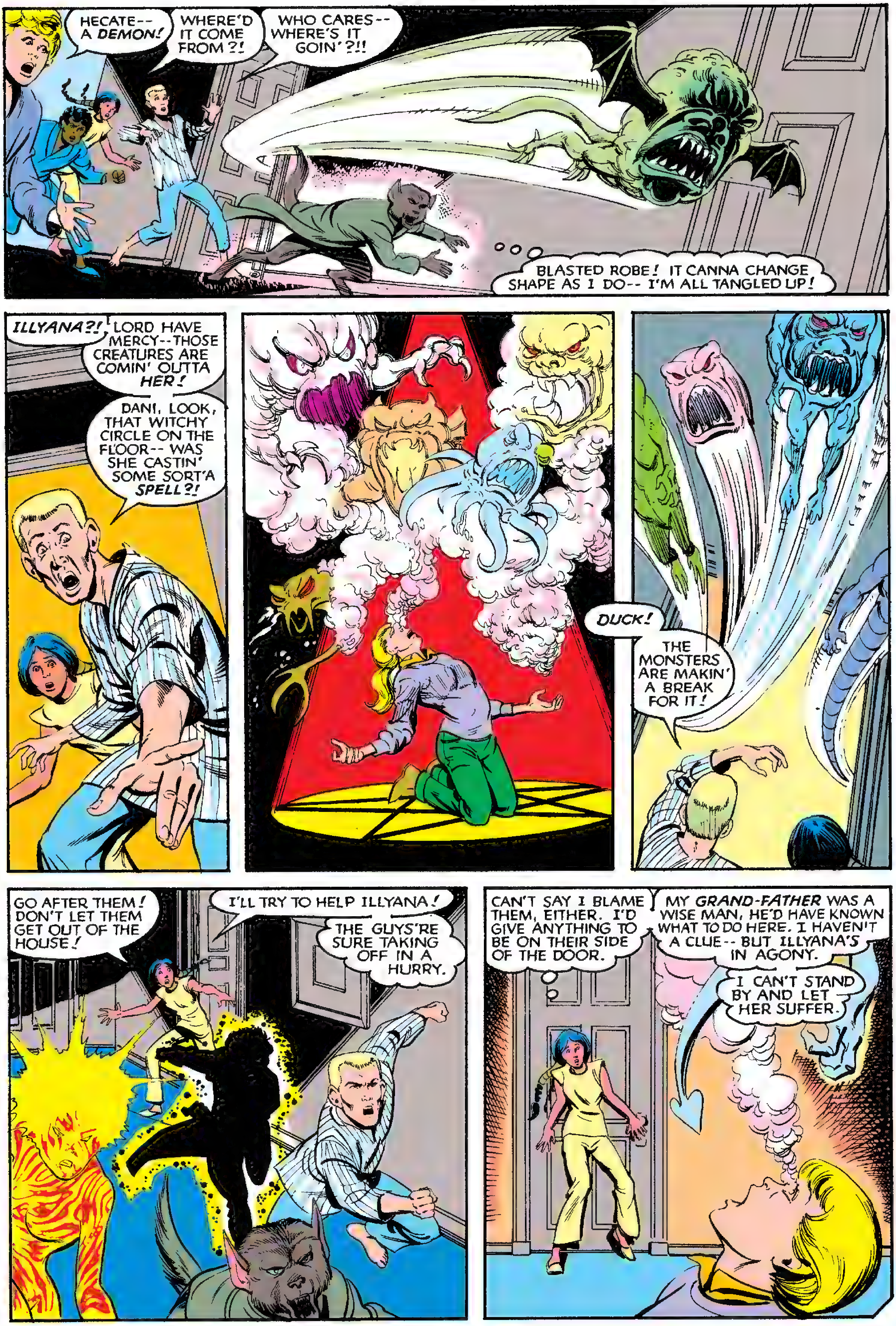

IT LOOKS SO PEACEFUL AND BEAUTIFUL, A STORYBOOK CAMPUS.
ITS FACADE IS AS DECEPTIVE AS MY OWN.
THE WOMAN WHO RUNS THIS SCHOOL--
--*EMMA FROST*-- IS THE *WHITE QUEEN* OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB...
...A SECRET SOCIETY WHOSE GOAL IS TO RULE THE WORLD.
SO STRANGE-- SHE AND HER COMRADES ARE FABULOUSLY WEALTHY...
...ONE WOULD THINK THEY'D BE CONTENT WITH THAT.
BUT POWER IS AN ADDICTIVE DRUG-- I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE--
--THE MORE YOU HAVE, THE MORE YOU WANT.
THIS IS THE SECRET COMPLEX BENEATH THE SCHOOL THAT KITTY AND ORORO TOLD ME ABOUT.
AND THERE'S KITTY!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!
I WAS RIGHT TO BE CONCERNED, SHE'S IN A MESS! THAT'S THE *WHITE QUEEN!*
*FAIT ACCOMPLI,* DEAR HEART. IT'S ALREADY DONE.
YOU ARE TRAPPED HERE WITHOUT THE POWER TO PHASE.
POOR KITTY. FIRST SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE MORLOCKS*, AND NOW THIS-- I ONLY HOPE I CAN BE OF SOME USE.
RAGE ALL YOU WISH, KATHERINE. RESIST WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT-- I ENJOY A GOOD MATCH WITH A WORTHY FOE-- BUT WHEN IT'S OVER, WHEN I'VE FINISHED WITH YOU...
*SEE X-MEN #178 & 179 -- L.

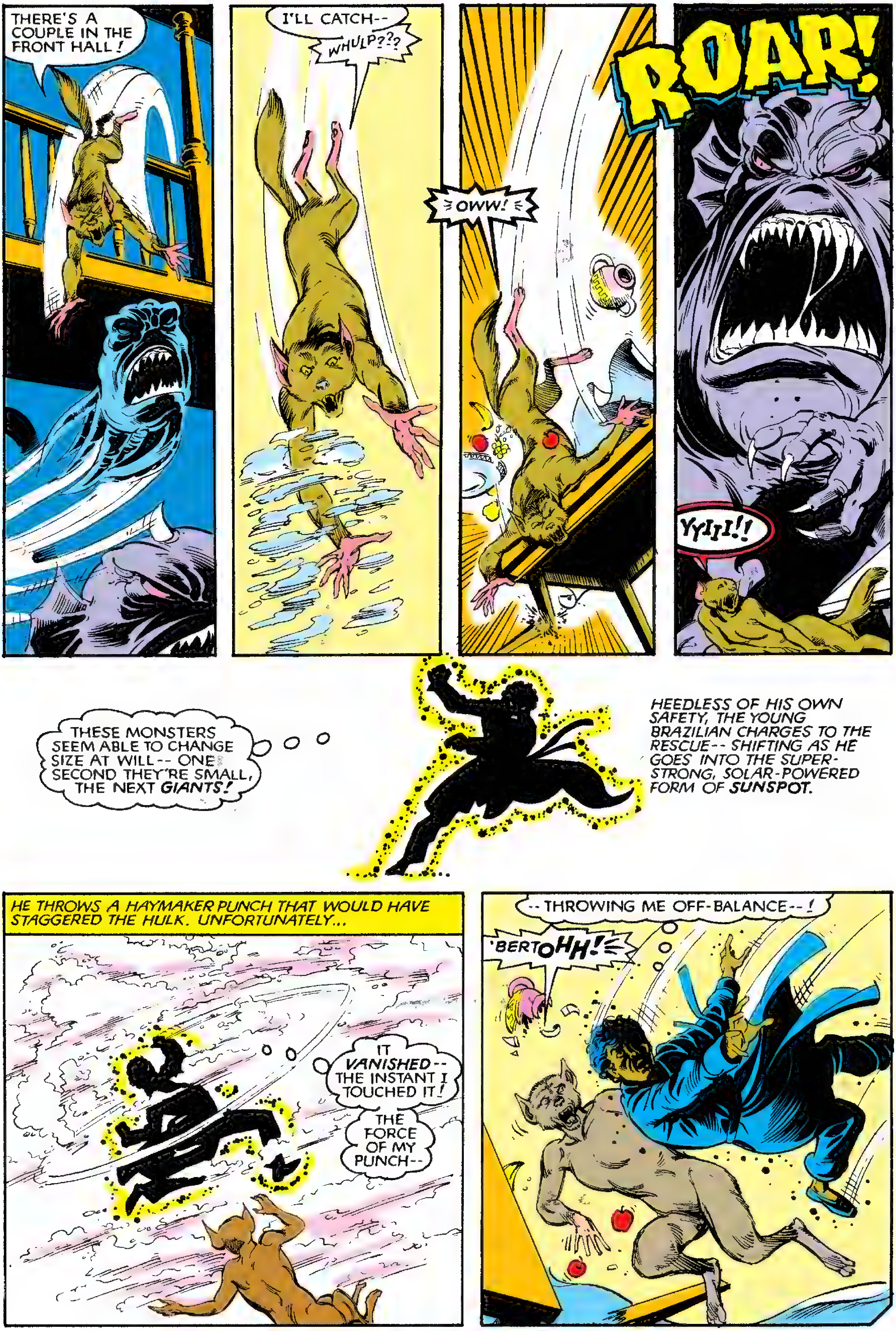

...YOU WON'T EVER WANT TO LEAVE ME, WON'T THAT BE NICE?
THE *X-MEN*--!
IF YOUR TEAM-MATES WERE COMING TO YOUR RESCUE...
...WOULDN'T THEY HAVE DONE SO BY NOW?
DOUG RAMSEY'LL CALL THE POLICE!
WHY SHOULD HE?
A HOLOGRAM -- IT'S DOUG!
TO HIM, YOU'RE NOT MISSING.
I'LL PLACE YOU IN RAPPORT WITH HIM...
...SO THAT YOU CAN SEE THROUGH HIS EYES.
IT'S CHILDS'-PLAY, REALLY. I TELEPATHICALLY MANIPULATE HIS PERCEPTIONS SO THAT HE BELIEVES YOU'RE BY HIS SIDE. THE ILLUSION IS PERFECT BECAUSE *HE* SUPPLIES THE DETAILS. YOU LOOK AS HE IMAGINES YOU SHOULD...
... AND SPEAK AND BEHAVE THE SAME. IN REALITY, THE POOR BOY TALKS TO HIMSELF AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, EMBRACES NOTHING.
THE FACT THAT HE LOVES YOU MAKES MY TASK INFINITELY EASIER.
LOVE?
YOU'RE *LYING!*
IF YOU INSIST.
HE'D DENY IT, OF COURSE, AS FERVENTLY AS YOU'RE NOW DENYING YOUR FEELINGS FOR HIM.
HE'S A FRIEND, NOTHING MORE!
KATHERINE, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW BETTER THAN TO TRY TO DECEIVE A MIND-READER.

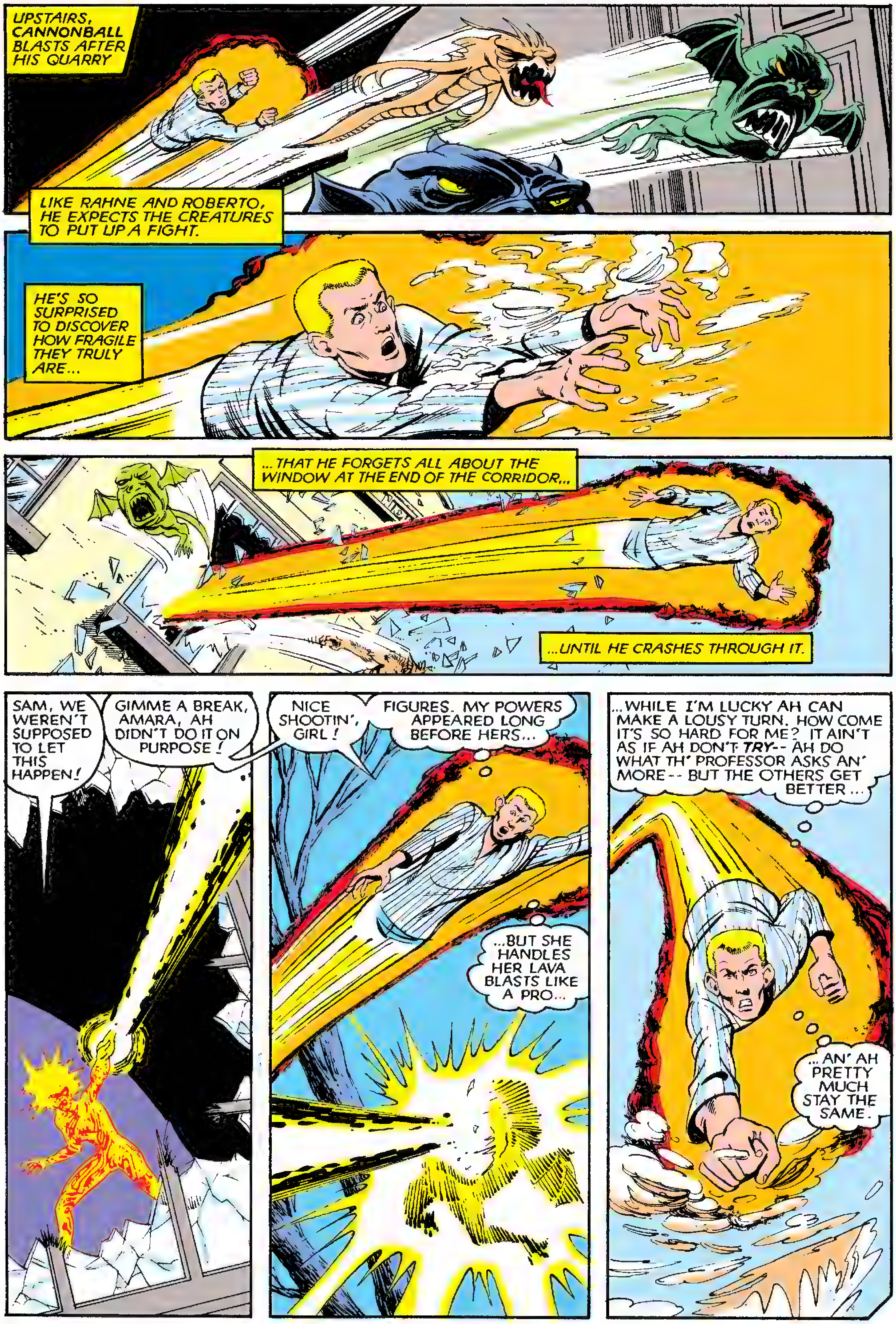

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
YOU'RE A *MUTANT*-- AS IS YOUR WOULD-BE PARAMOUR, DOUGLAS-- A VALUABLE COMMODITY I MEAN TO CONTROL.
AND TO THINK I FELT SORRY FOR YOU WHEN I HEARD WHAT ***MASTERMIND*** HAD DONE!
WOULD YOU LIKE A TASTE OF THAT EXPERIENCE, BRAT?!
HE CONFRONTED ME WITH ILLUSIONS SO TERRIBLE--HORRORS SO PRIMAL AND PERSONAL--THAT MY MIND RETREATED INTO A CATATONIC STATE, A LIVING DEATH FROM WHICH HE BELIEVED I'D NEVER 'WAKE.
HIS ASSUMPTION WAS THAT I LACKED BOTH THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE...
...TO DRAG MYSELF OUT OF THAT ABYSS. HE WAS WRONG.
MASTERMIND'S FATAL FLAW WAS HIS TENDENCY TO UNDERESTIMATE HIS OPPOSITION. DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.
YOUR WORTH IS FINITE, KATHERINE. I SUGGEST YOU NOT PUSH YOUR LUCK.
HEY, I'M SCARED.
I KNOW...
...BUT IT'S A NICE ACT.
NOW THAT I'VE TAKEN A MOMENT TO REGAIN MY TEMPER, SHALL I MAKE YOU AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE?
ONLY IF YOU WANT A REAL RUDE SUGGESTION ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH IT.
WHAT DELIGHTFULLY INVENTIVE THOUGHTS! KATHERINE, YOU'VE A STREAK OF PURE NASTINESS IN YOU THAT RIVALS MY OWN!
YOU'D ENJOY BELONGING TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
NOT A CHANCE.

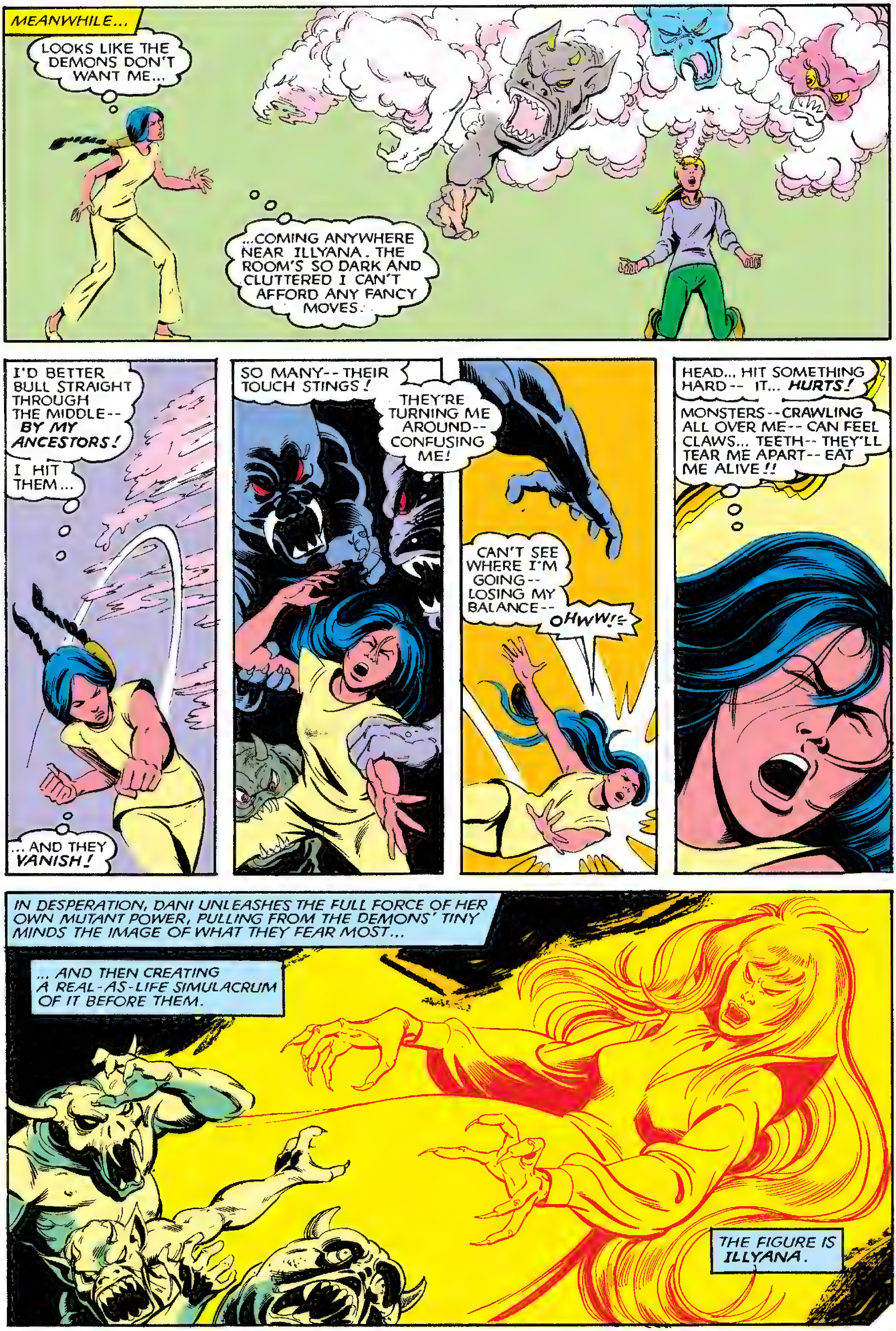

I'VE GOT TO KEEP MYSELF UNDER CONTROL. THE MORE UPSET I GET, THE HARDER IT BECOMES...
...TO MAINTAIN THE PSYCHIC DEFENSES PROFESSOR XAVIER TAUGHT ME.
THEY WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD, EVEN THEN.
SHUT UP! GET OUT OF MY MIND! LEAVE ME ALONE!
MAKE ME.
WITCH! IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON YOU!
BUT YOU CAN'T. YOU ARE COMPLETELY AT MY MERCY-- AS ARE YOUR PARENTS.
WHAT D'YOU MEAN?
I CAN DO A GREAT DEAL, KATHERINE-- TO THEM, OR FOR THEM. I CAN GRANT THEM WEALTH, POWER--ANYTHING THEIR GREEDY HEARTS DESIRE--
--OR I CAN CRUSH THEM AS UTTERLY AS MASTERMIND TRIED TO DO ME.
WOULD YOU SEE YOUR PARENTS PENNILESS--STARVING, HOMELESS, IN RAGS, TOTALLY WITHOUT HOPE? ARE YOU THAT CRUEL?
YOU CAN'T.
TRY ME.
THAT ISN'T FAIR--GASP!
KITTY SAW ME! BUT HOW-- uh-oh!
I CAN SENSE THE WHITE QUEEN'S PSI-POWERS--SHE CAN SEE ME, TOO!
A SPY--COLOSSUS' BABY SISTER! I'LL SOON BE RID OF HER!
ILLYANA-- RUN!!
TOO LATE!

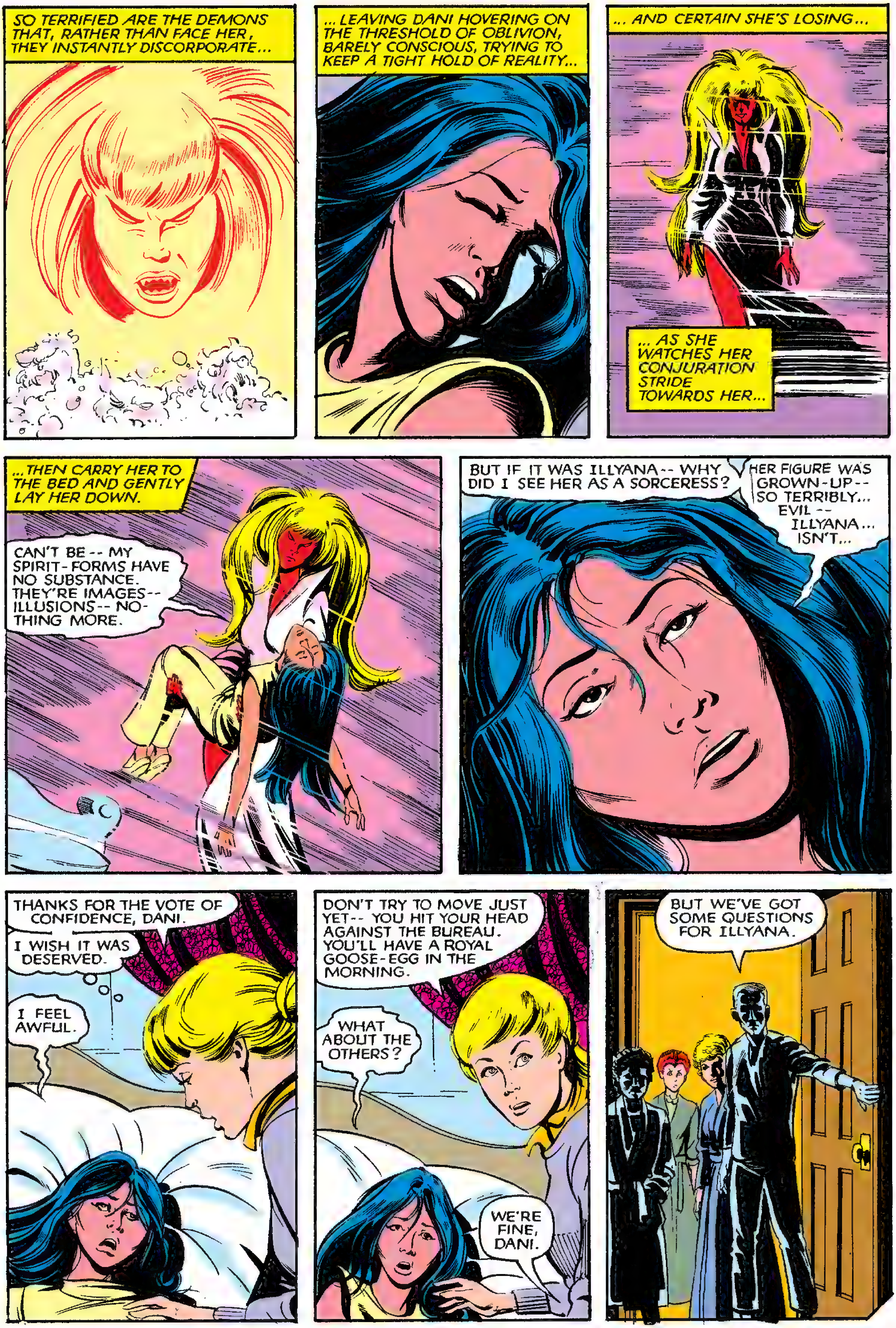

AND...
DANIELLE MOONSTAR.
RAHNE SINCLAIR.
SAM GUTHRIE.
ROBERTO DaCOSTA.
AMARA AQUILLA.
THAT WAS A SCREAM!
I'VE NE'ER HEARD ANYTHING SO FRIGHTFUL!
IT CAME FROM THE X-MEN'S WING OF THE MANSION!
ILLYANA'S THE ONLY ONE THERE!
HER BEDROOM DOOR'S LOCKED--
--BUT NOT FOR LONG!
ILLYANA--YOU...
..OKAY!?!

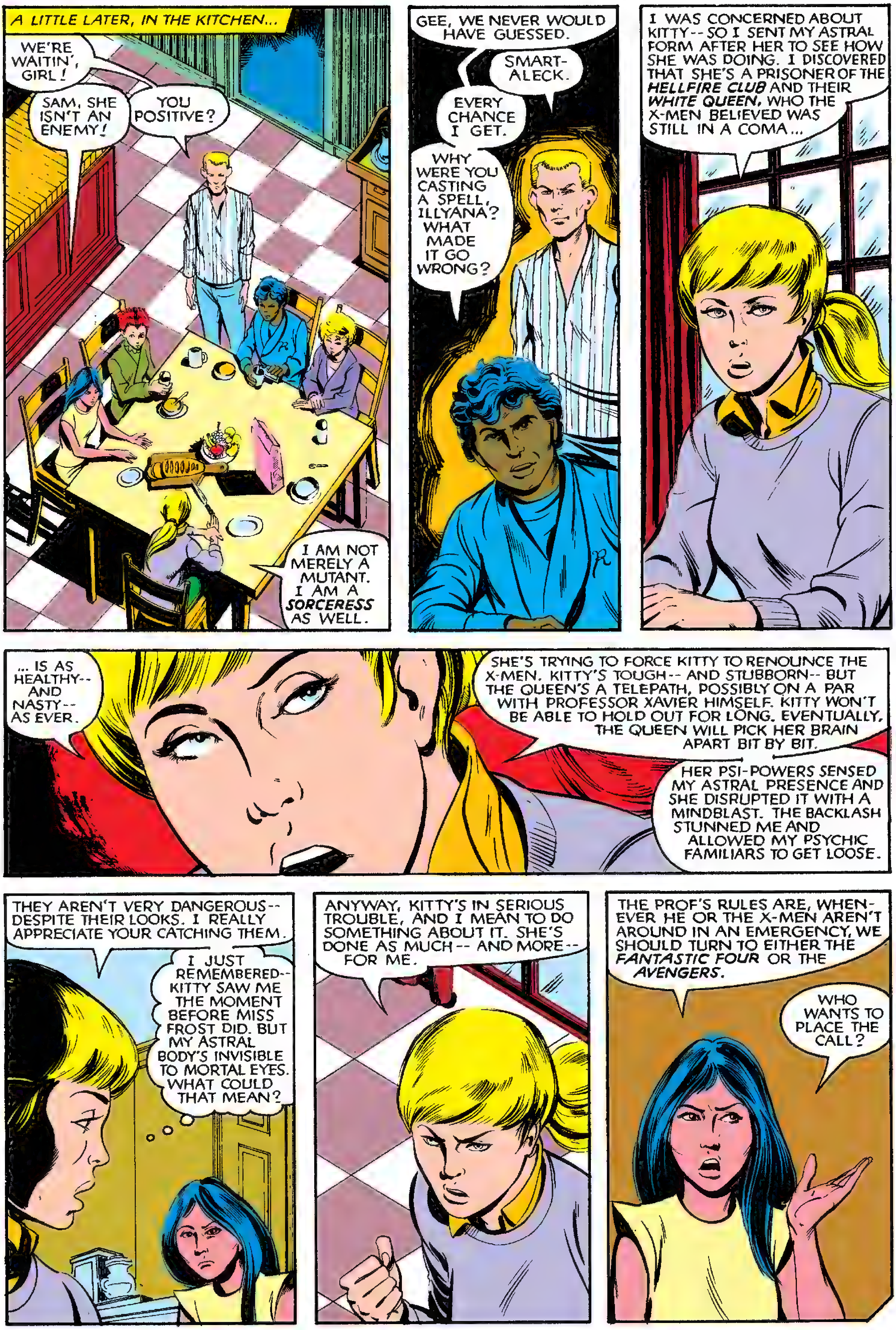

HECATE-- A *DEMON!*
WHERE'D IT COME FROM?!
WHO CARES-- WHERE'S IT GOIN'?!!
BLASTED ROBE! IT CANNA CHANGE SHAPE AS I DO-- I'M ALL TANGLED UP!
*ILLYANA?!*
LORD HAVE MERCY--THOSE CREATURES ARE COMIN' OUTTA *HER!*
DANI, LOOK, THAT WITCHY CIRCLE ON THE FLOOR-- WAS SHE CASTIN' SOME SORT'A *SPELL?!*
*DUCK!*
THE MONSTERS ARE MAKIN' A BREAK FOR IT!
GO AFTER THEM! DON'T LET THEM GET OUT OF THE HOUSE!
I'LL TRY TO HELP ILLYANA!
THE GUYS'RE SURE TAKING OFF IN A HURRY.
CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM, EITHER. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE ON THEIR SIDE OF THE DOOR.
MY *GRAND-FATHER* WAS A WISE MAN, HE'D HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO DO HERE. I HAVEN'T A CLUE-- BUT ILLYANA'S IN AGONY.
I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET HER SUFFER.

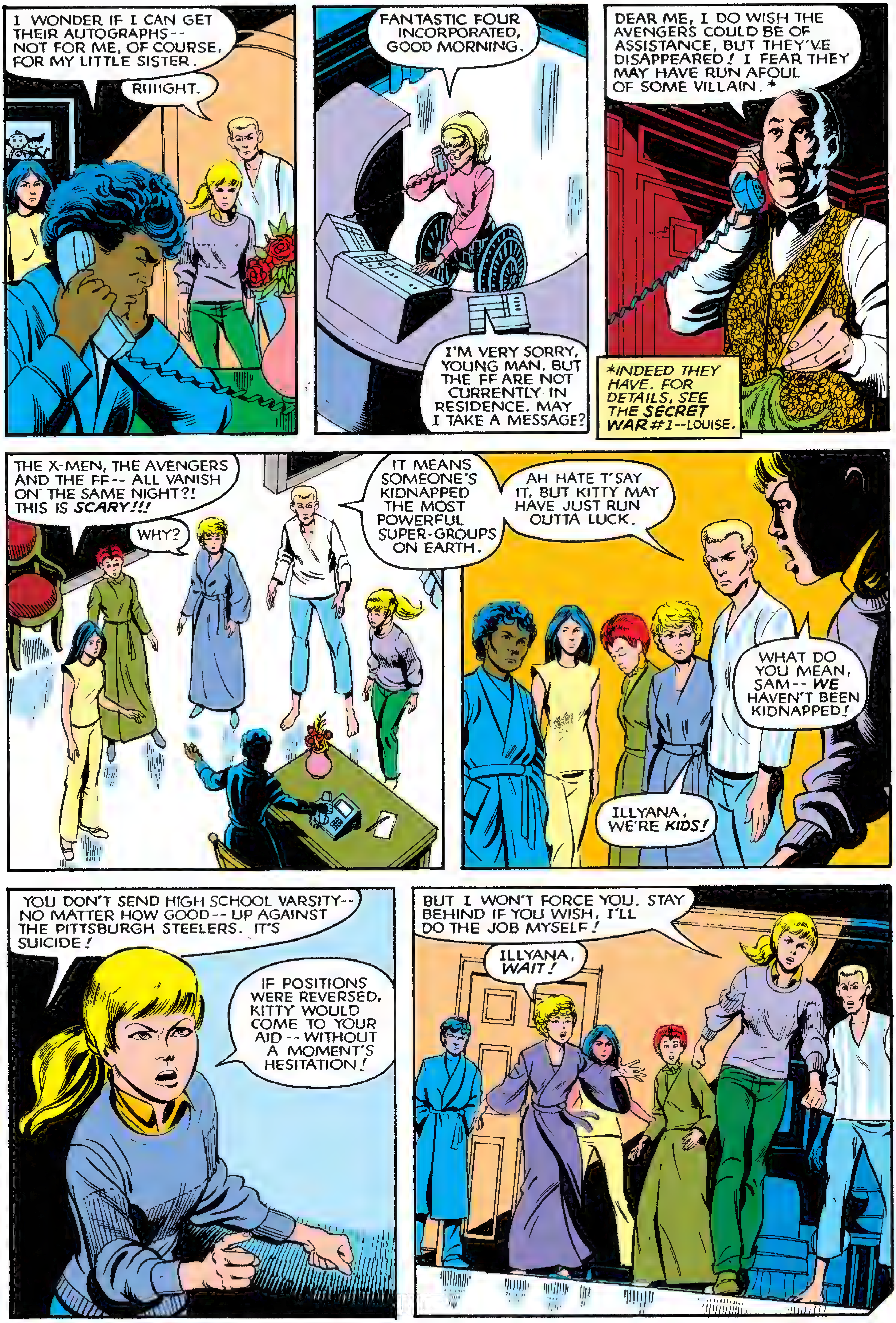

THERE'S A COUPLE IN THE FRONT HALL!
I'LL CATCH--
WHULP???
OWW!
ROAR!
YYIII!!
THESE MONSTERS SEEM ABLE TO CHANGE SIZE AT WILL-- ONE SECOND THEY'RE SMALL, THE NEXT GIANTS!
HEEDLESS OF HIS OWN SAFETY, THE YOUNG BRAZILIAN CHARGES TO THE RESCUE-- SHIFTING AS HE GOES INTO THE SUPER-STRONG, SOLAR-POWERED FORM OF SUNSPOT.
HE THROWS A HAYMAKER PUNCH THAT WOULD HAVE STAGGERED THE HULK. UNFORTUNATELY...
IT VANISHED-- THE INSTANT I TOUCHED IT!
THE FORCE OF MY PUNCH--
--THROWING ME OFF-BALANCE--!
'BERTOHH!

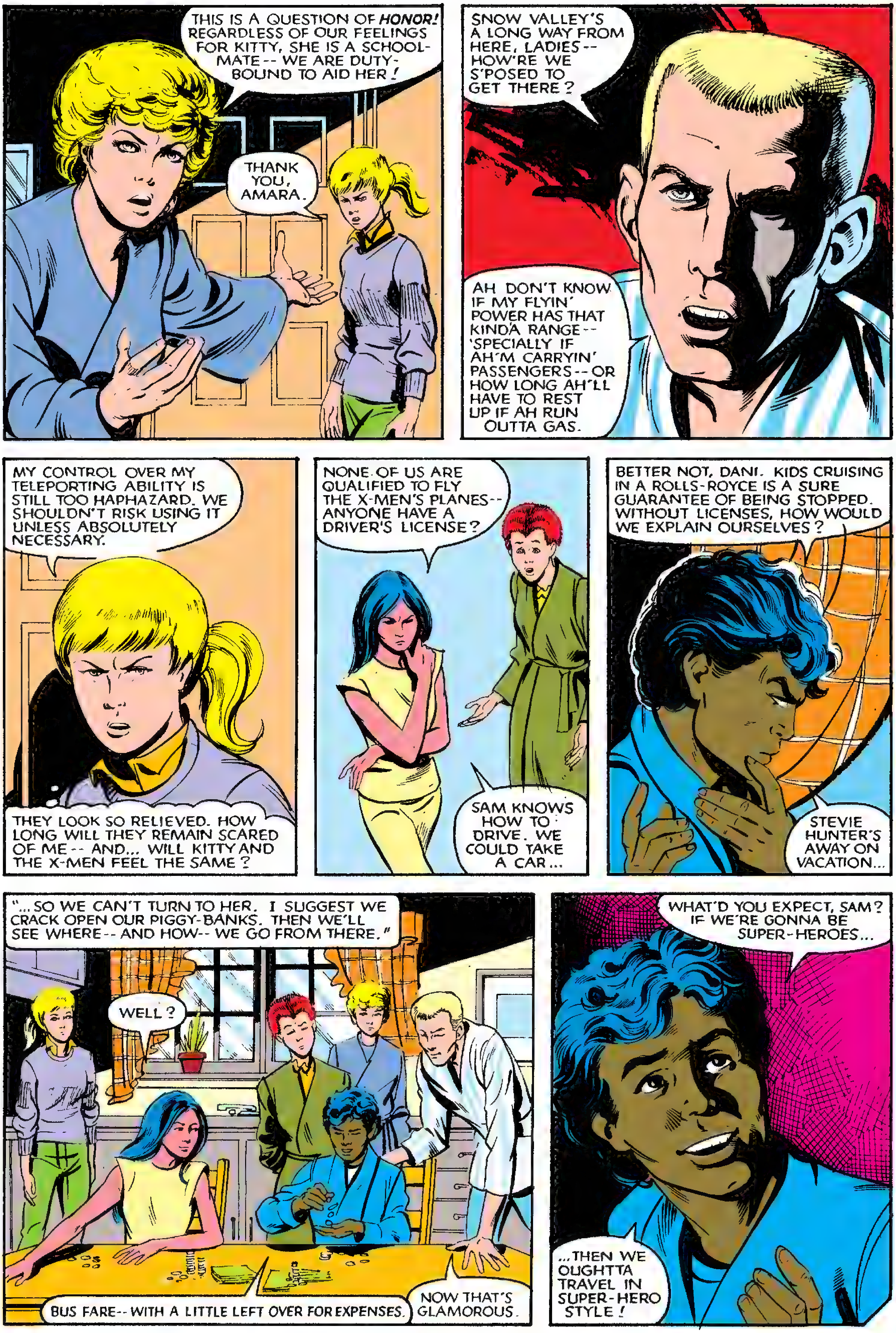

UPSTAIRS, CANNONBALL BLASTS AFTER HIS QUARRY
LIKE RAHNE AND ROBERTO, HE EXPECTS THE CREATURES TO PUT UP A FIGHT.
HE'S SO SURPRISED TO DISCOVER HOW FRAGILE THEY TRULY ARE...
...THAT HE FORGETS ALL ABOUT THE WINDOW AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR...
...UNTIL HE CRASHES THROUGH IT.
SAM, WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO LET THIS HAPPEN!
GIMME A BREAK, AMARA, AH DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE!
NICE SHOOTIN', GIRL!
FIGURES. MY POWERS APPEARED LONG BEFORE HERS...
...BUT SHE HANDLES HER LAVA BLASTS LIKE A PRO...
...WHILE I'M LUCKY AH CAN MAKE A LOUSY TURN. HOW COME IT'S SO HARD FOR ME? IT AIN'T AS IF AH DON'T TRY-- AH DO WHAT TH' PROFESSOR ASKS AN' MORE-- BUT THE OTHERS GET BETTER...
...AN' AH PRETTY MUCH STAY THE SAME.

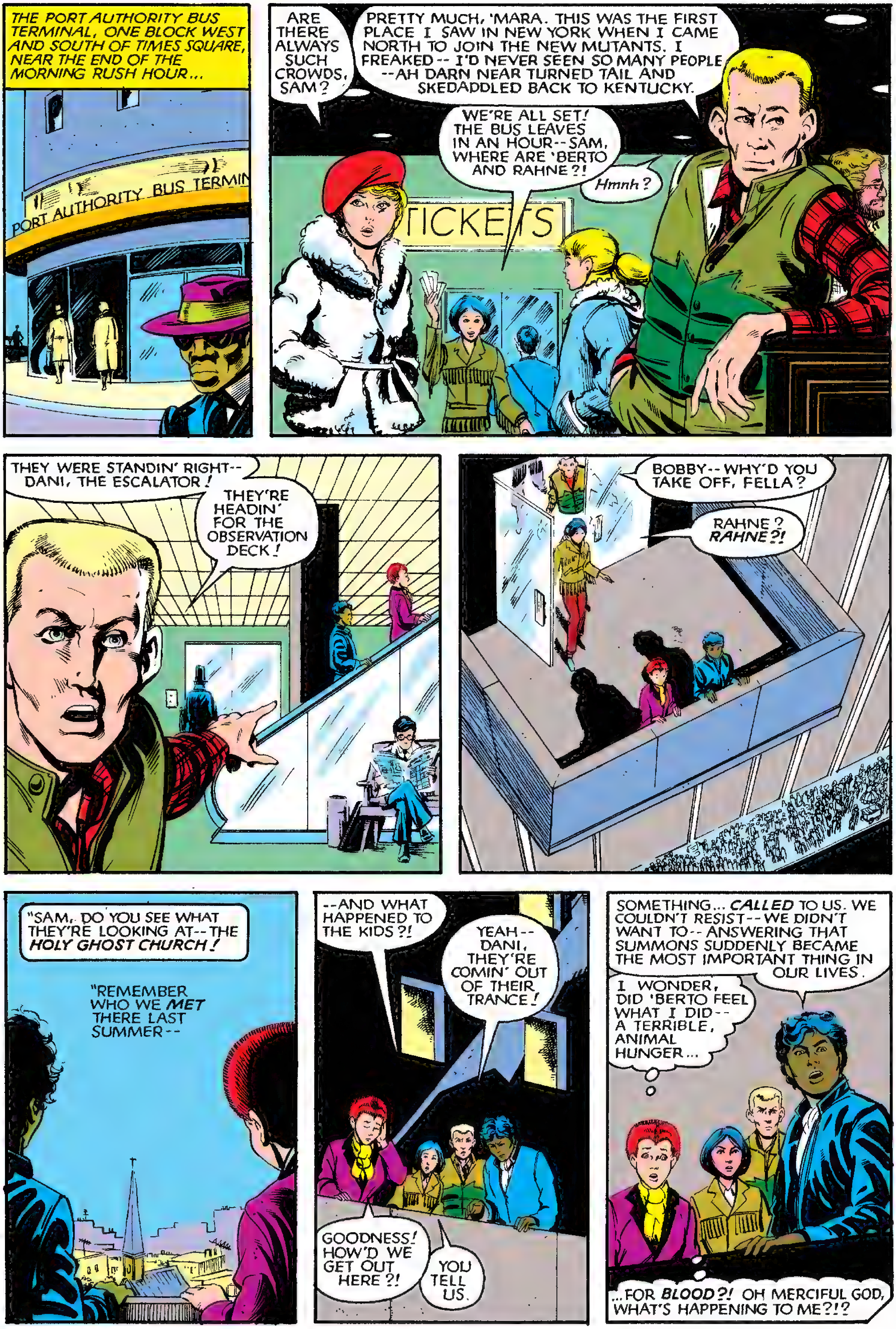

MEANWHILE...
LOOKS LIKE THE DEMONS DON'T WANT ME...
...COMING ANYWHERE NEAR ILLYANA. THE ROOM'S SO DARK AND CLUTTERED I CAN'T AFFORD ANY FANCY MOVES.
I'D BETTER BULL STRAIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE-- *BY MY ANCESTORS!*
I HIT THEM...
...AND THEY *VANISH!*
SO MANY-- THEIR TOUCH STINGS!
THEY'RE TURNING ME AROUND-- CONFUSING ME!
CAN'T SEE WHERE I'M GOING-- LOSING MY BALANCE--
*OHWW!*
HEAD... HIT SOMETHING HARD-- IT... *HURTS!*
MONSTERS--CRAWLING ALL OVER ME-- CAN FEEL CLAWS... TEETH-- THEY'LL TEAR ME APART-- EAT ME ALIVE!!
*IN DESPERATION, DANI UNLEASHES THE FULL FORCE OF HER OWN MUTANT POWER, PULLING FROM THE DEMONS' TINY MINDS THE IMAGE OF WHAT THEY FEAR MOST...*
*...AND THEN CREATING A REAL-AS-LIFE SIMULACRUM OF IT BEFORE THEM.*
*THE FIGURE IS ILLYANA.*

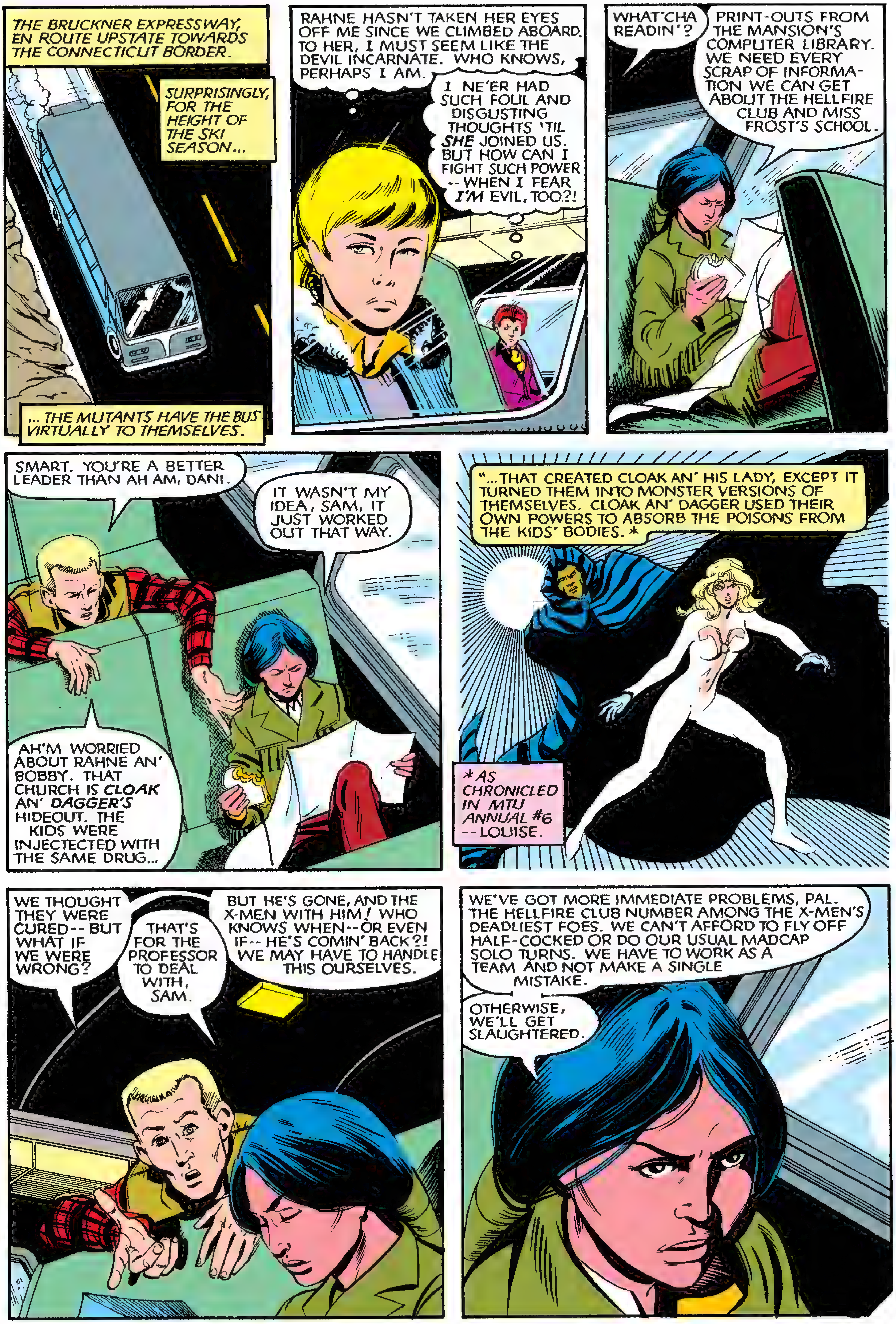

SO TERRIFIED ARE THE DEMONS THAT, RATHER THAN FACE HER, THEY INSTANTLY DISCORPORATE...
... LEAVING DANI HOVERING ON THE THRESHOLD OF OBLIVION, BARELY CONSCIOUS, TRYING TO KEEP A TIGHT HOLD OF REALITY...
... AND CERTAIN SHE'S LOSING...
... AS SHE WATCHES HER CONJURATION STRIDE TOWARDS HER...
... THEN CARRY HER TO THE BED AND GENTLY LAY HER DOWN.
CAN'T BE -- MY SPIRIT-FORMS HAVE NO SUBSTANCE. THEY'RE IMAGES -- ILLUSIONS -- NOTHING MORE.
BUT IF IT WAS ILLYANA -- WHY DID I SEE HER AS A SORCERESS?
HER FIGURE WAS GROWN-UP -- SO TERRIBLY... EVIL -- ILLYANA... ISN'T...
THANKS FOR THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, DANI.
I WISH IT WAS DESERVED.
I FEEL AWFUL.
DON'T TRY TO MOVE JUST YET -- YOU HIT YOUR HEAD AGAINST THE BUREAU. YOU'LL HAVE A ROYAL GOOSE-EGG IN THE MORNING.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?
WE'RE FINE, DANI.
BUT WE'VE GOT SOME QUESTIONS FOR ILLYANA.

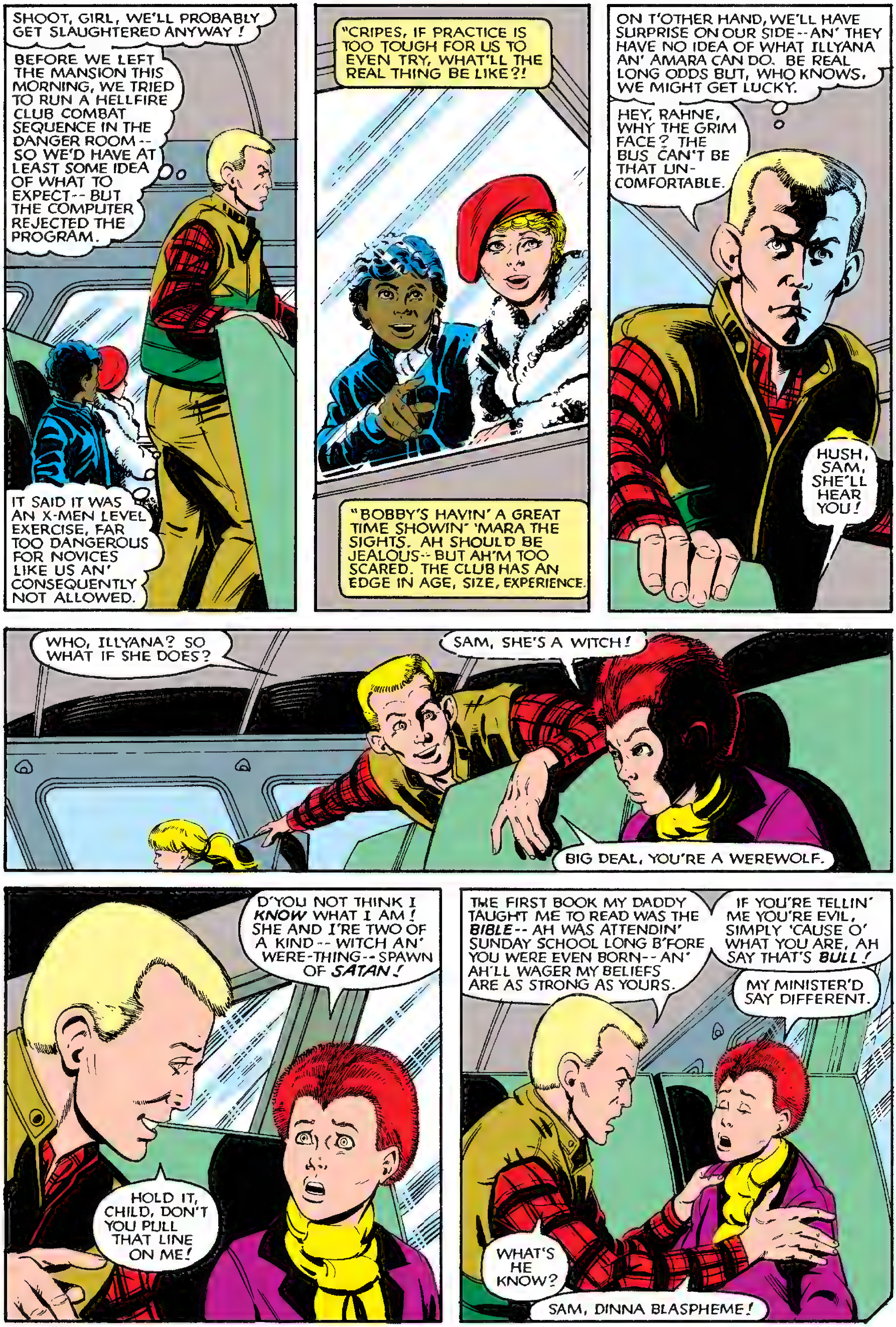

A LITTLE LATER, IN THE KITCHEN...
WE'RE WAITIN', GIRL!
SAM, SHE ISN'T AN ENEMY!
YOU POSITIVE?
I AM NOT MERELY A MUTANT. I AM A **SORCERESS** AS WELL.
GEE, WE NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED.
SMART-ALECK.
EVERY CHANCE I GET.
WHY WERE YOU CASTING A SPELL, ILLYANA? WHAT MADE IT GO WRONG?
I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT KITTY -- SO I SENT MY ASTRAL FORM AFTER HER TO SEE HOW SHE WAS DOING. I DISCOVERED THAT SHE'S A PRISONER OF THE ***HELLFIRE CLUB*** AND THEIR ***WHITE QUEEN***, WHO THE X-MEN BELIEVED WAS STILL IN A COMA...
... IS AS HEALTHY -- AND NASTY -- AS EVER.
SHE'S TRYING TO FORCE KITTY TO RENOUNCE THE X-MEN. KITTY'S TOUGH -- AND STUBBORN -- BUT THE QUEEN'S A TELEPATH, POSSIBLY ON A PAR WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER HIMSELF. KITTY WON'T BE ABLE TO HOLD OUT FOR LONG. EVENTUALLY, THE QUEEN WILL PICK HER BRAIN APART BIT BY BIT.
HER PSI-POWERS SENSED MY ASTRAL PRESENCE AND SHE DISRUPTED IT WITH A MINDBLAST. THE BACKLASH STUNNED ME AND ALLOWED MY PSYCHIC FAMILIARS TO GET LOOSE.
THEY AREN'T VERY DANGEROUS -- DESPITE THEIR LOOKS. I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR CATCHING THEM.
I JUST REMEMBERED -- KITTY SAW ME THE MOMENT BEFORE MISS FROST DID. BUT MY ASTRAL BODY'S INVISIBLE TO MORTAL EYES. WHAT COULD THAT MEAN?
ANYWAY, KITTY'S IN SERIOUS TROUBLE, AND I MEAN TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. SHE'S DONE AS MUCH -- AND MORE -- FOR ME.
THE PROF'S RULES ARE, WHENEVER HE OR THE X-MEN AREN'T AROUND IN AN EMERGENCY, WE SHOULD TURN TO EITHER THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR*** OR THE ***AVENGERS***.
WHO WANTS TO PLACE THE CALL?

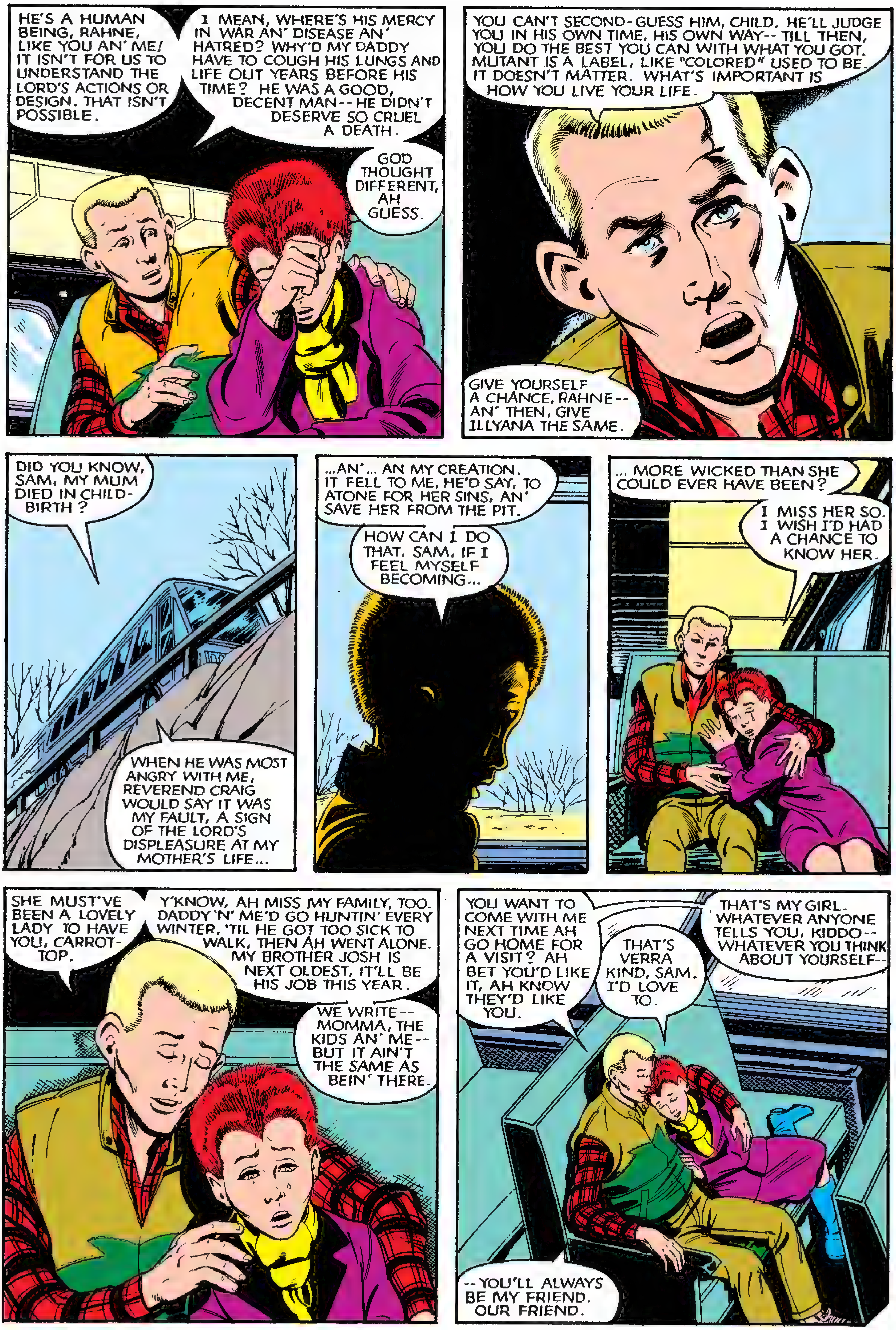

I WONDER IF I CAN GET THEIR AUTOGRAPHS-- NOT FOR ME, OF COURSE, FOR MY LITTLE SISTER.
RIIIGHT.
FANTASTIC FOUR INCORPORATED, GOOD MORNING.
I'M VERY SORRY, YOUNG MAN, BUT THE FF ARE NOT CURRENTLY IN RESIDENCE. MAY I TAKE A MESSAGE?
DEAR ME, I DO WISH THE AVENGERS COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE, BUT THEY'VE DISAPPEARED! I FEAR THEY MAY HAVE RUN AFOUL OF SOME VILLAIN.*
*INDEED THEY HAVE. FOR DETAILS, SEE THE SECRET WAR #1--LOUISE.
THE X-MEN, THE AVENGERS AND THE FF-- ALL VANISH ON THE SAME NIGHT?! THIS IS SCARY!!!
WHY?
IT MEANS SOMEONE'S KIDNAPPED THE MOST POWERFUL SUPER-GROUPS ON EARTH.
AH HATE T'SAY IT, BUT KITTY MAY HAVE JUST RUN OUTTA LUCK.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SAM-- WE HAVEN'T BEEN KIDNAPPED!
ILLYANA, WE'RE KIDS!
YOU DON'T SEND HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY-- NO MATTER HOW GOOD-- UP AGAINST THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS. IT'S SUICIDE!
IF POSITIONS WERE REVERSED, KITTY WOULD COME TO YOUR AID -- WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION!
BUT I WON'T FORCE YOU. STAY BEHIND IF YOU WISH, I'LL DO THE JOB MYSELF!
ILLYANA, WAIT!

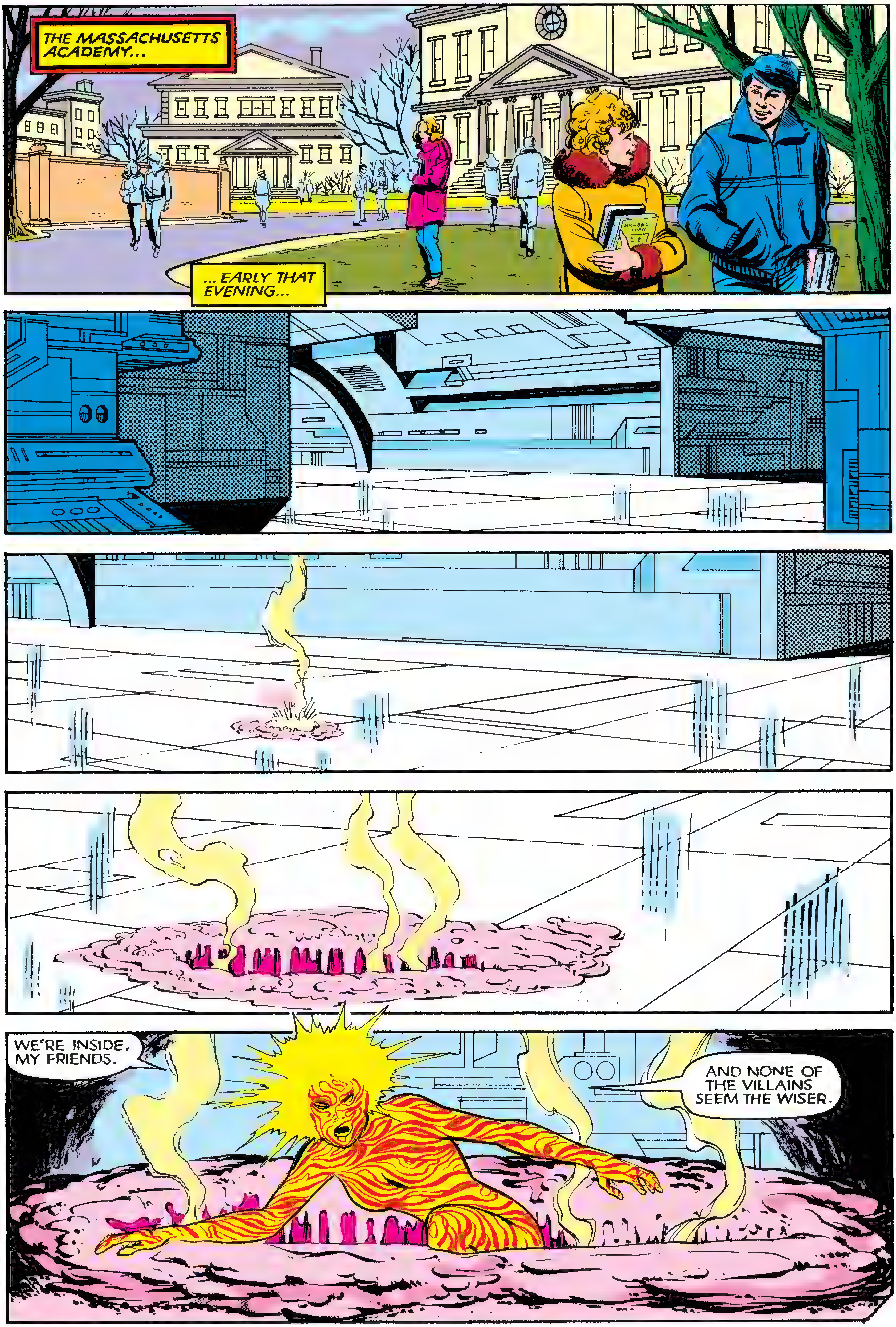

THIS IS A QUESTION OF **HONOR!** REGARDLESS OF OUR FEELINGS FOR KITTY, SHE IS A SCHOOLMATE -- WE ARE DUTY-BOUND TO AID HER!
THANK YOU, AMARA.
SNOW VALLEY'S A LONG WAY FROM HERE, LADIES -- HOW'RE WE S'POSED TO GET THERE?
AH DON'T KNOW IF MY FLYIN' POWER HAS THAT KINDA RANGE -- 'SPECIALLY IF AH'M CARRYIN' PASSENGERS -- OR HOW LONG AH'LL HAVE TO REST UP IF AH RUN OUTTA GAS.
MY CONTROL OVER MY TELEPORTING ABILITY IS STILL TOO HAPHAZARD. WE SHOULDN'T RISK USING IT UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.
THEY LOOK SO RELIEVED. HOW LONG WILL THEY REMAIN SCARED OF ME -- AND... WILL KITTY AND THE X-MEN FEEL THE SAME?
NONE OF US ARE QUALIFIED TO FLY THE X-MEN'S PLANES -- ANYONE HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE?
SAM KNOWS HOW TO DRIVE. WE COULD TAKE A CAR...
BETTER NOT, DANI. KIDS CRUISING IN A ROLLS-ROYCE IS A SURE GUARANTEE OF BEING STOPPED. WITHOUT LICENSES, HOW WOULD WE EXPLAIN OURSELVES?
STEVIE HUNTER'S AWAY ON VACATION...
"...SO WE CAN'T TURN TO HER. I SUGGEST WE CRACK OPEN OUR PIGGY-BANKS. THEN WE'LL SEE WHERE -- AND HOW -- WE GO FROM THERE."
WELL?
BUS FARE -- WITH A LITTLE LEFT OVER FOR EXPENSES.
NOW THAT'S GLAMOROUS.
WHAT'D YOU EXPECT, SAM? IF WE'RE GONNA BE SUPER-HEROES...
...THEN WE OUGHTTA TRAVEL IN SUPER-HERO STYLE!

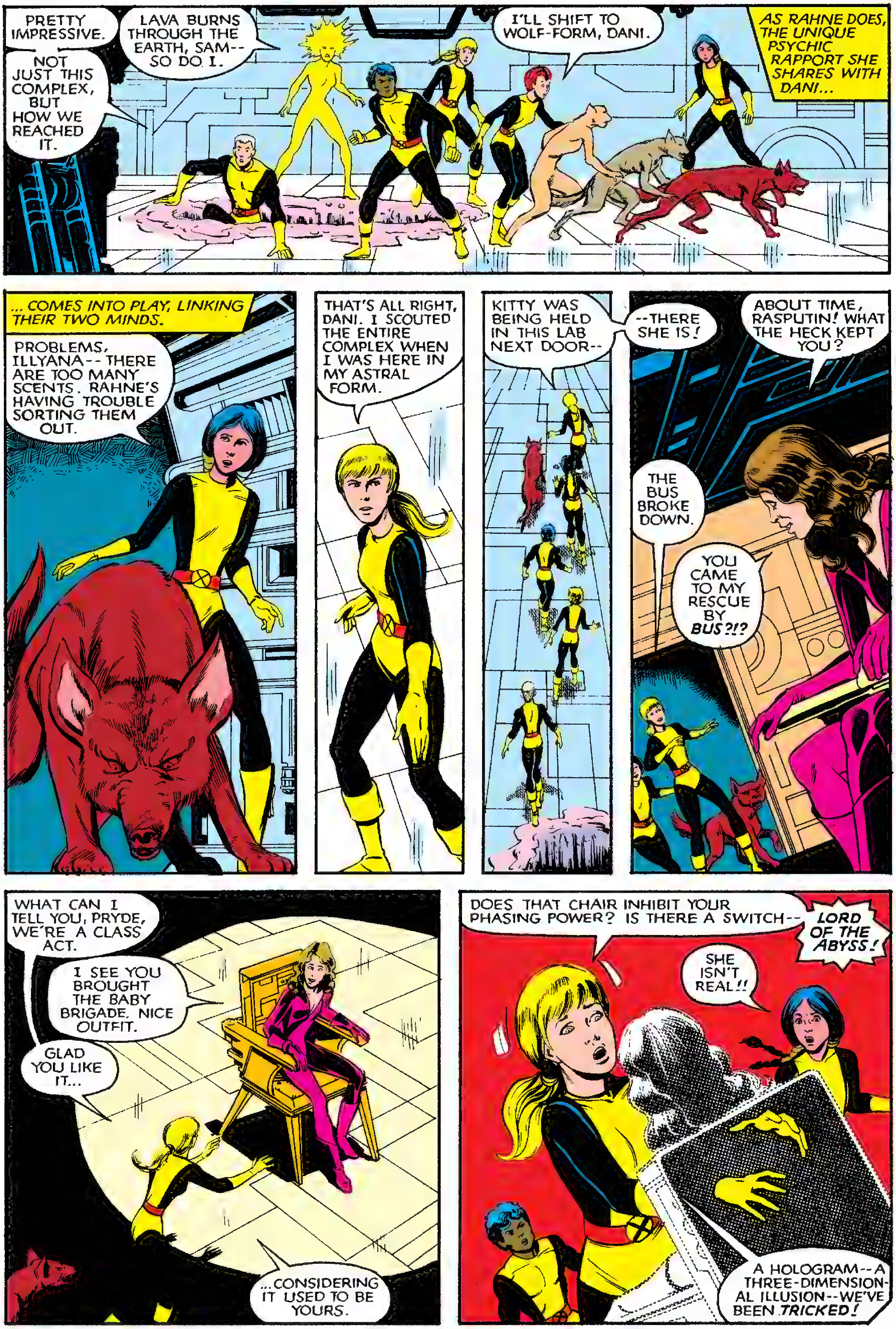

THE PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL, ONE BLOCK WEST AND SOUTH OF TIMES SQUARE, NEAR THE END OF THE MORNING RUSH HOUR...
PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMIN
ARE THERE ALWAYS SUCH CROWDS, SAM?
PRETTY MUCH, 'MARA. THIS WAS THE FIRST PLACE I SAW IN NEW YORK WHEN I CAME NORTH TO JOIN THE NEW MUTANTS. I FREAKED -- I'D NEVER SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE --AH DARN NEAR TURNED TAIL AND SKEDADDLED BACK TO KENTUCKY.
WE'RE ALL SET! THE BUS LEAVES IN AN HOUR--SAM, WHERE ARE 'BERTO AND RAHNE?!
Hmnh?
TICKETS
THEY WERE STANDIN' RIGHT-- DANI, THE ESCALATOR!
THEY'RE HEADIN' FOR THE OBSERVATION DECK!
BOBBY--WHY'D YOU TAKE OFF, FELLA?
RAHNE? RAHNE?!
"SAM, DO YOU SEE WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING AT--THE HOLY GHOST CHURCH!
"REMEMBER WHO WE MET THERE LAST SUMMER--
--AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KIDS?!
YEAH-- DANI, THEY'RE COMIN' OUT OF THEIR TRANCE!
GOODNESS! HOW'D WE GET OUT HERE?!
YOU TELL US.
SOMETHING... CALLED TO US. WE COULDN'T RESIST--WE DIDN'T WANT TO-- ANSWERING THAT SUMMONS SUDDENLY BECAME THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN OUR LIVES.
I WONDER, DID 'BERTO FEEL WHAT I DID-- A TERRIBLE, ANIMAL HUNGER...
...FOR BLOOD?! OH MERCIFUL GOD, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!?

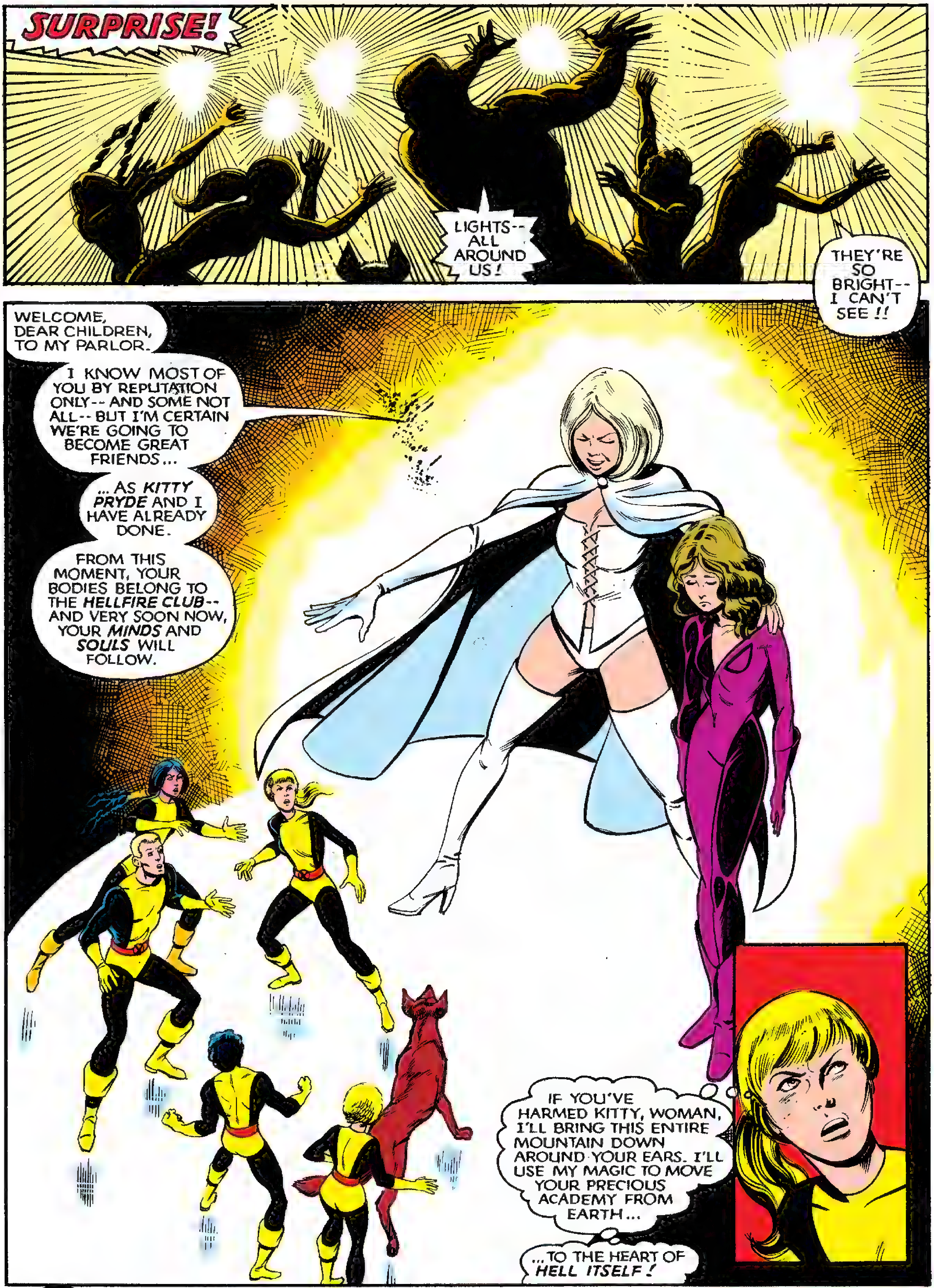

THE BRUCKNER EXPRESSWAY, EN ROUTE UPSTATE TOWARDS THE CONNECTICUT BORDER.
SURPRISINGLY, FOR THE HEIGHT OF THE SKI SEASON...
...THE MUTANTS HAVE THE BUS VIRTUALLY TO THEMSELVES.
RAHNE HASN'T TAKEN HER EYES OFF ME SINCE WE CLIMBED ABOARD. TO HER, I MUST SEEM LIKE THE DEVIL INCARNATE. WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS I AM.
I NE'ER HAD SUCH FOUL AND DISGUSTING THOUGHTS 'TIL SHE JOINED US. BUT HOW CAN I FIGHT SUCH POWER -- WHEN I FEAR I'M EVIL, TOO?!
WHAT'CHA READIN'?
PRINT-OUTS FROM THE MANSION'S COMPUTER LIBRARY. WE NEED EVERY SCRAP OF INFORMATION WE CAN GET ABOUT THE HELLFIRE CLUB AND MISS FROST'S SCHOOL.
SMART. YOU'RE A BETTER LEADER THAN AH AM, DANI.
IT WASN'T MY IDEA, SAM. IT JUST WORKED OUT THAT WAY.
AH'M WORRIED ABOUT RAHNE AN' BOBBY. THAT CHURCH IS CLOAK AN' DAGGER'S HIDEOUT. THE KIDS WERE INJECTECTED WITH THE SAME DRUG...
"...THAT CREATED CLOAK AN' HIS LADY, EXCEPT IT TURNED THEM INTO MONSTER VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES. CLOAK AN' DAGGER USED THEIR OWN POWERS TO ABSORB THE POISONS FROM THE KIDS' BODIES. *
* AS CHRONICLED IN MTU ANNUAL #6 -- LOUISE.
WE THOUGHT THEY WERE CURED-- BUT WHAT IF WE WERE WRONG?
THAT'S FOR THE PROFESSOR TO DEAL WITH, SAM.
BUT HE'S GONE, AND THE X-MEN WITH HIM! WHO KNOWS WHEN--OR EVEN IF--HE'S COMIN' BACK?! WE MAY HAVE TO HANDLE THIS OURSELVES.
WE'VE GOT MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS, PAL. THE HELLFIRE CLUB NUMBER AMONG THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST FOES. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO FLY OFF HALF-COCKED OR DO OUR USUAL MADCAP SOLO TURNS. WE HAVE TO WORK AS A TEAM AND NOT MAKE A SINGLE MISTAKE.
OTHERWISE, WE'LL GET SLAUGHTERED.


SHOOT, GIRL, WE'LL PROBABLY GET SLAUGHTERED ANYWAY!
BEFORE WE LEFT THE MANSION THIS MORNING, WE TRIED TO RUN A HELLFIRE CLUB COMBAT SEQUENCE IN THE DANGER ROOM -- SO WE'D HAVE AT LEAST SOME IDEA OF WHAT TO EXPECT -- BUT THE COMPUTER REJECTED THE PROGRAM.
IT SAID IT WAS AN X-MEN LEVEL EXERCISE, FAR TOO DANGEROUS FOR NOVICES LIKE US AN' CONSEQUENTLY NOT ALLOWED.
"CRIPES, IF PRACTICE IS TOO TOUGH FOR US TO EVEN TRY, WHAT'LL THE REAL THING BE LIKE?!
"BOBBY'S HAVIN' A GREAT TIME SHOWIN' 'MARA THE SIGHTS. AH SHOULD BE JEALOUS -- BUT AH'M TOO SCARED. THE CLUB HAS AN EDGE IN AGE, SIZE, EXPERIENCE.
ON T'OTHER HAND, WE'LL HAVE SURPRISE ON OUR SIDE -- AN' THEY HAVE NO IDEA OF WHAT ILLYANA AN' AMARA CAN DO. BE REAL LONG ODDS BUT, WHO KNOWS, WE MIGHT GET LUCKY.
HEY, RAHNE, WHY THE GRIM FACE? THE BUS CAN'T BE THAT UNCOMFORTABLE.
HUSH, SAM, SHE'LL HEAR YOU!
WHO, ILLYANA? SO WHAT IF SHE DOES?
SAM, SHE'S A WITCH!
BIG DEAL, YOU'RE A WEREWOLF.
D'YOU NOT THINK I KNOW WHAT I AM! SHE AND I'RE TWO OF A KIND -- WITCH AN' WERE-THING -- SPAWN OF SATAN!
HOLD IT, CHILD, DON'T YOU PULL THAT LINE ON ME!
THE FIRST BOOK MY DADDY TAUGHT ME TO READ WAS THE BIBLE -- AH WAS ATTENDIN' SUNDAY SCHOOL LONG B'FORE YOU WERE EVEN BORN -- AN' AH'LL WAGER MY BELIEFS ARE AS STRONG AS YOURS.
IF YOU'RE TELLIN' ME YOU'RE EVIL, SIMPLY 'CAUSE O' WHAT YOU ARE, AH SAY THAT'S BULL!
MY MINISTER'D SAY DIFFERENT.
WHAT'S HE KNOW?
SAM, DINNA BLASPHEME!


HE'S A HUMAN BEING, RAHNE, LIKE YOU AN' ME! IT ISN'T FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S ACTIONS OR DESIGN. THAT ISN'T POSSIBLE.
I MEAN, WHERE'S HIS MERCY IN WAR AN' DISEASE AN' HATRED? WHY'D MY DADDY HAVE TO COUGH HIS LUNGS AND LIFE OUT YEARS BEFORE HIS TIME? HE WAS A GOOD, DECENT MAN--HE DIDN'T DESERVE SO CRUEL A DEATH.
GOD THOUGHT DIFFERENT, AH GUESS.
YOU CAN'T SECOND-GUESS HIM, CHILD. HE'LL JUDGE YOU IN HIS OWN TIME, HIS OWN WAY-- TILL THEN, YOU DO THE BEST YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU GOT. MUTANT IS A LABEL, LIKE "COLORED" USED TO BE. IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE.
GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE, RAHNE-- AN' THEN, GIVE ILLYANA THE SAME.
DID YOU KNOW, SAM, MY MUM DIED IN CHILDBIRTH?
WHEN HE WAS MOST ANGRY WITH ME, REVEREND CRAIG WOULD SAY IT WAS MY FAULT, A SIGN OF THE LORD'S DISPLEASURE AT MY MOTHER'S LIFE...
...AN'... AN MY CREATION. IT FELL TO ME, HE'D SAY, TO ATONE FOR HER SINS, AN' SAVE HER FROM THE PIT.
HOW CAN I DO THAT, SAM, IF I FEEL MYSELF BECOMING...
... MORE WICKED THAN SHE COULD EVER HAVE BEEN?
I MISS HER SO. I WISH I'D HAD A CHANCE TO KNOW HER.
SHE MUST'VE BEEN A LOVELY LADY TO HAVE YOU, CARROT-TOP.
Y'KNOW, AH MISS MY FAMILY, TOO. DADDY 'N' ME'D GO HUNTIN' EVERY WINTER, 'TIL HE GOT TOO SICK TO WALK, THEN AH WENT ALONE. MY BROTHER JOSH IS NEXT OLDEST, IT'LL BE HIS JOB THIS YEAR.
WE WRITE-- MOMMA, THE KIDS AN' ME-- BUT IT AIN'T THE SAME AS BEIN' THERE.
YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME NEXT TIME AH GO HOME FOR A VISIT? AH BET YOU'D LIKE IT, AH KNOW THEY'D LIKE YOU.
THAT'S VERRA KIND, SAM. I'D LOVE TO.
THAT'S MY GIRL. WHATEVER ANYONE TELLS YOU, KIDDO-- WHATEVER YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF--
--YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY FRIEND. OUR FRIEND.


THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY...
... EARLY THAT EVENING...
WE'RE INSIDE, MY FRIENDS.
AND NONE OF THE VILLAINS SEEM THE WISER.


PRETTY IMPRESSIVE.
NOT JUST THIS COMPLEX, BUT HOW WE REACHED IT.
LAVA BURNS THROUGH THE EARTH, SAM-- SO DO I.
I'LL SHIFT TO WOLF-FORM, DANI.
AS RAHNE DOES, THE UNIQUE PSYCHIC RAPPORT SHE SHARES WITH DANI...
...COMES INTO PLAY, LINKING THEIR TWO MINDS.
PROBLEMS, ILLYANA-- THERE ARE TOO MANY SCENTS. RAHNE'S HAVING TROUBLE SORTING THEM OUT.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DANI. I SCOUTED THE ENTIRE COMPLEX WHEN I WAS HERE IN MY ASTRAL FORM.
KITTY WAS BEING HELD IN THIS LAB NEXT DOOR--
--THERE SHE IS!
ABOUT TIME, RASPUTIN! WHAT THE HECK KEPT YOU?
THE BUS BROKE DOWN.
YOU CAME TO MY RESCUE BY *BUS?!?*
WHAT CAN I TELL YOU, PRYDE, WE'RE A CLASS ACT.
I SEE YOU BROUGHT THE BABY BRIGADE. NICE OUTFIT.
GLAD YOU LIKE IT...
...CONSIDERING IT USED TO BE YOURS.
DOES THAT CHAIR INHIBIT YOUR PHASING POWER? IS THERE A SWITCH--
LORD OF THE ABYSS!
SHE ISN'T REAL!!
A HOLOGRAM--A THREE-DIMENSIONAL ILLUSION--WE'VE BEEN *TRICKED!*


SURPRISE!
LIGHTS-- ALL AROUND US!
THEY'RE SO BRIGHT-- I CAN'T SEE!!
WELCOME, DEAR CHILDREN, TO MY PARLOR.
I KNOW MOST OF YOU BY REPUTATION ONLY-- AND SOME NOT ALL-- BUT I'M CERTAIN WE'RE GOING TO BECOME GREAT FRIENDS...
...AS KITTY PRYDE AND I HAVE ALREADY DONE.
FROM THIS MOMENT, YOUR BODIES BELONG TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB-- AND VERY SOON NOW, YOUR MINDS AND SOULS WILL FOLLOW.
IF YOU'VE HARMED KITTY, WOMAN, I'LL BRING THIS ENTIRE MOUNTAIN DOWN AROUND YOUR EARS. I'LL USE MY MAGIC TO MOVE YOUR PRECIOUS ACADEMY FROM EARTH...
...TO THE HEART OF HELL ITSELF!

NEXT ISSUE MEET THE **HELLIONS** IN: **AWAY GAME!**

MARVEL®
THE NEW MUTANTS™
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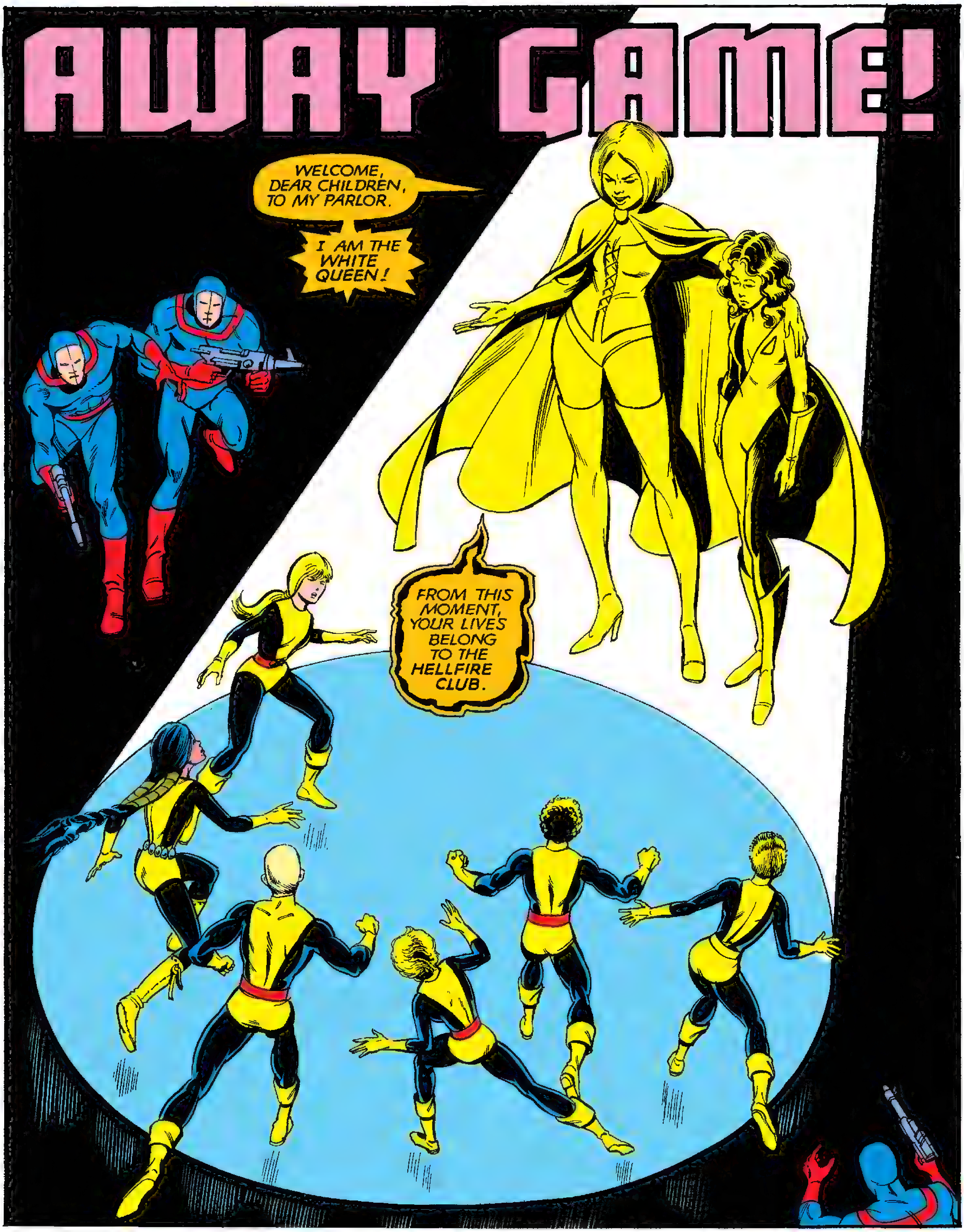
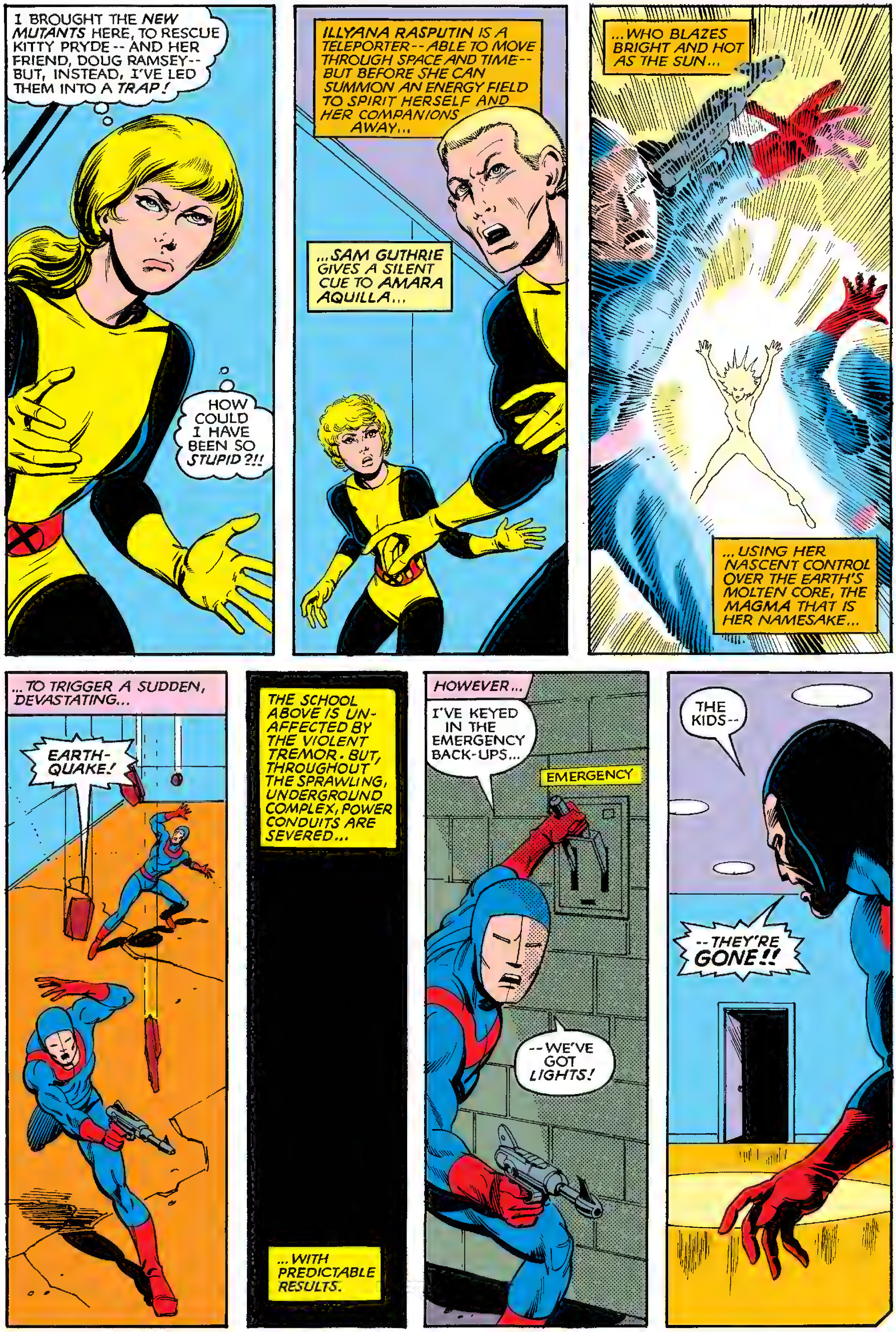
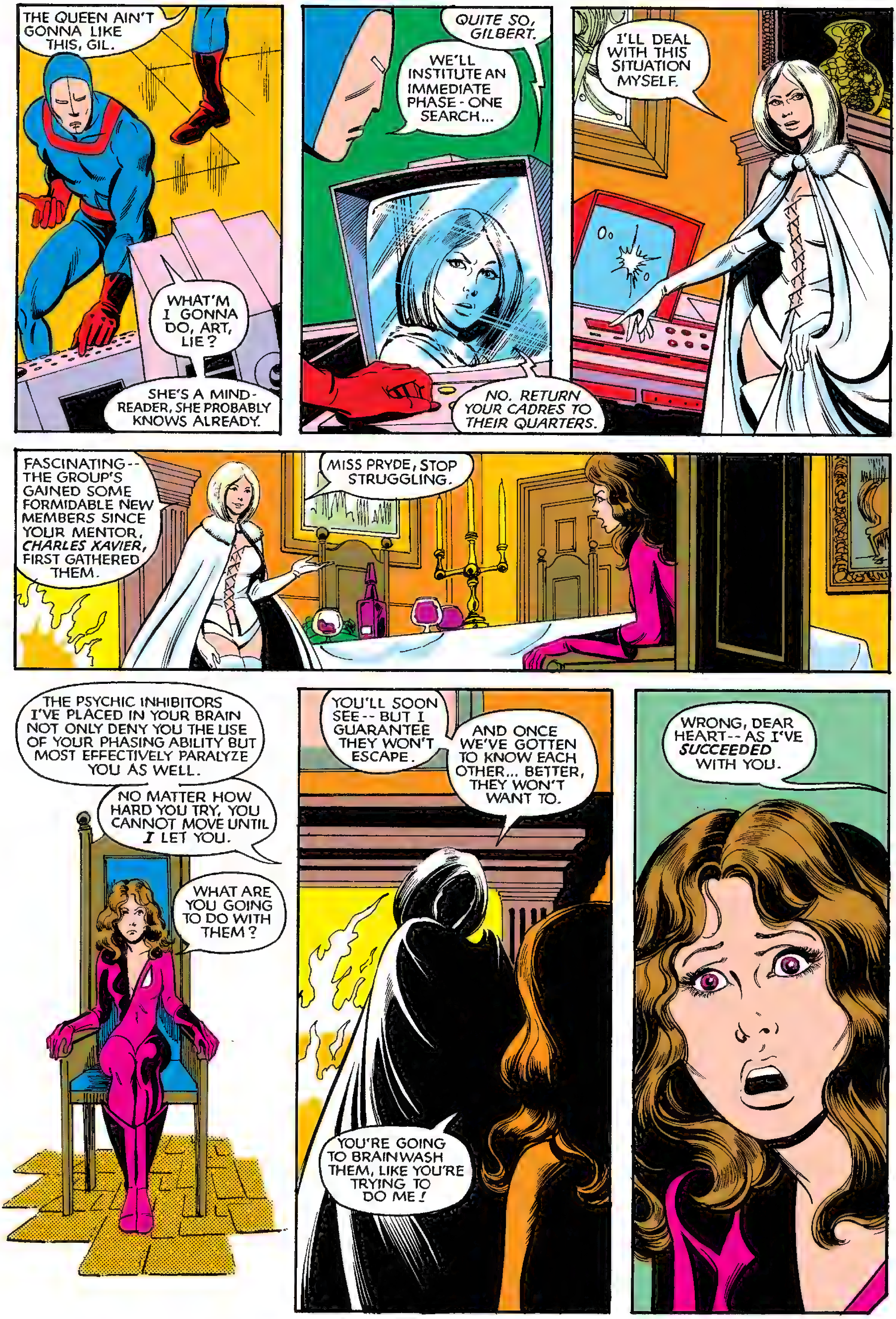
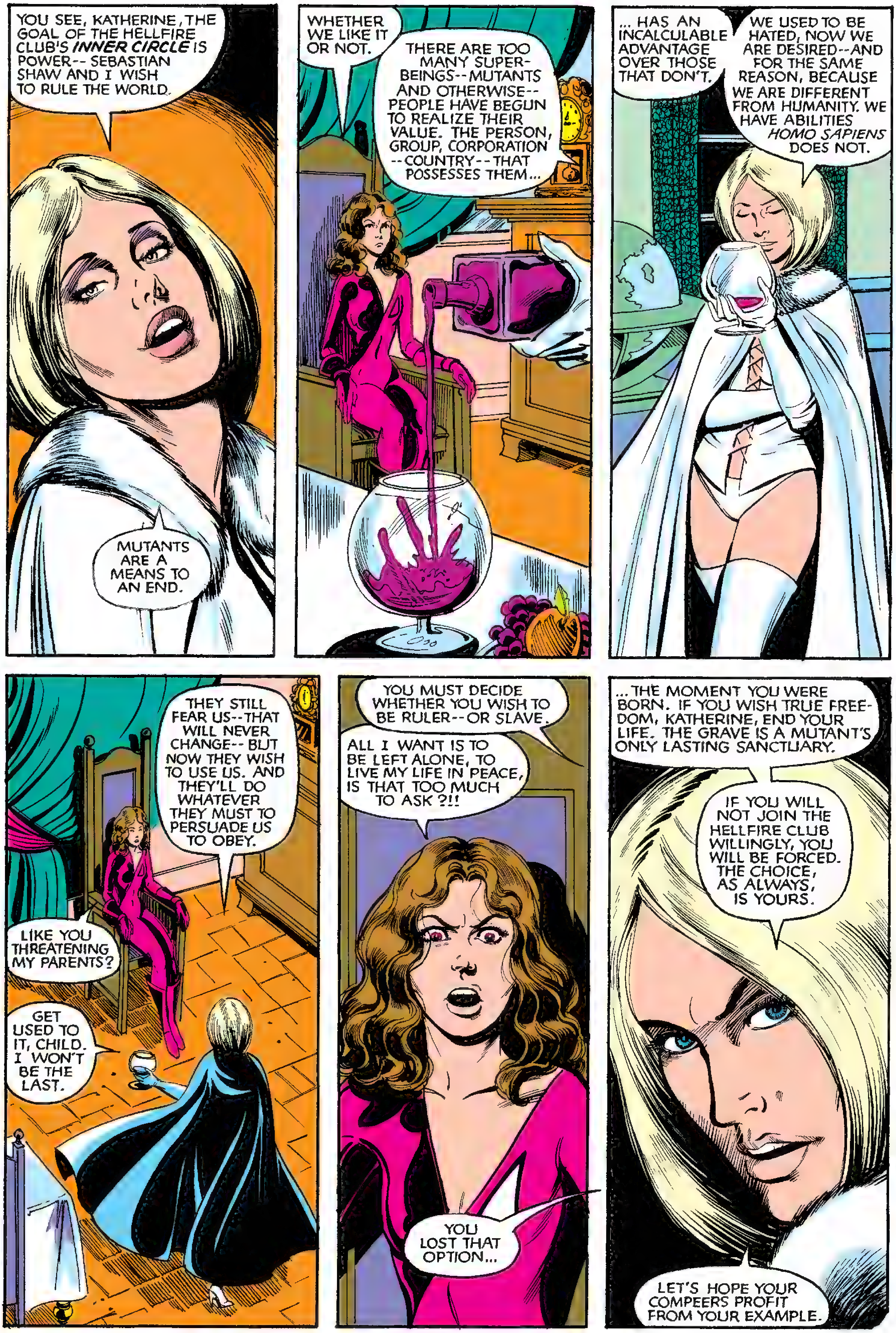
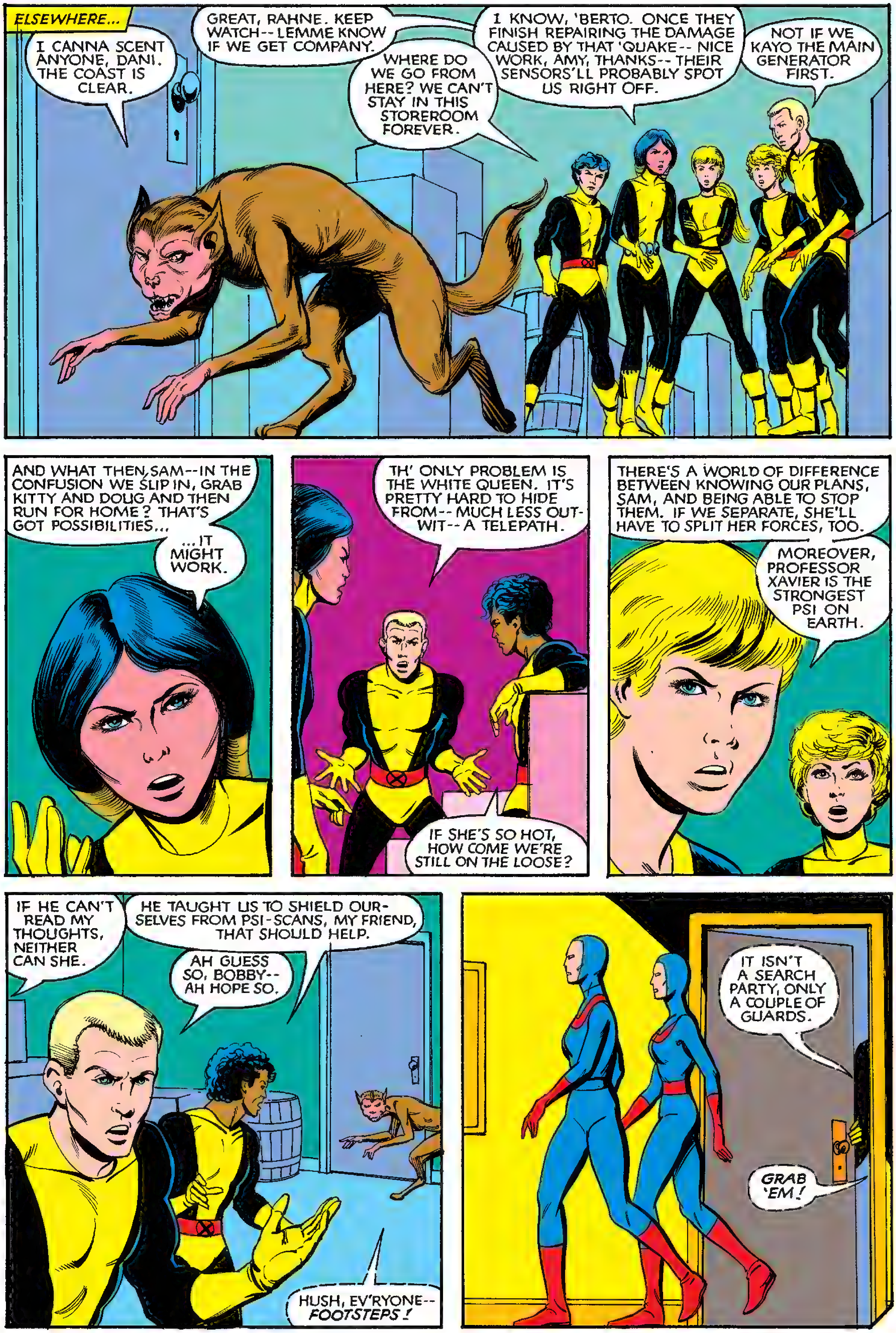
# AWAY GAME!

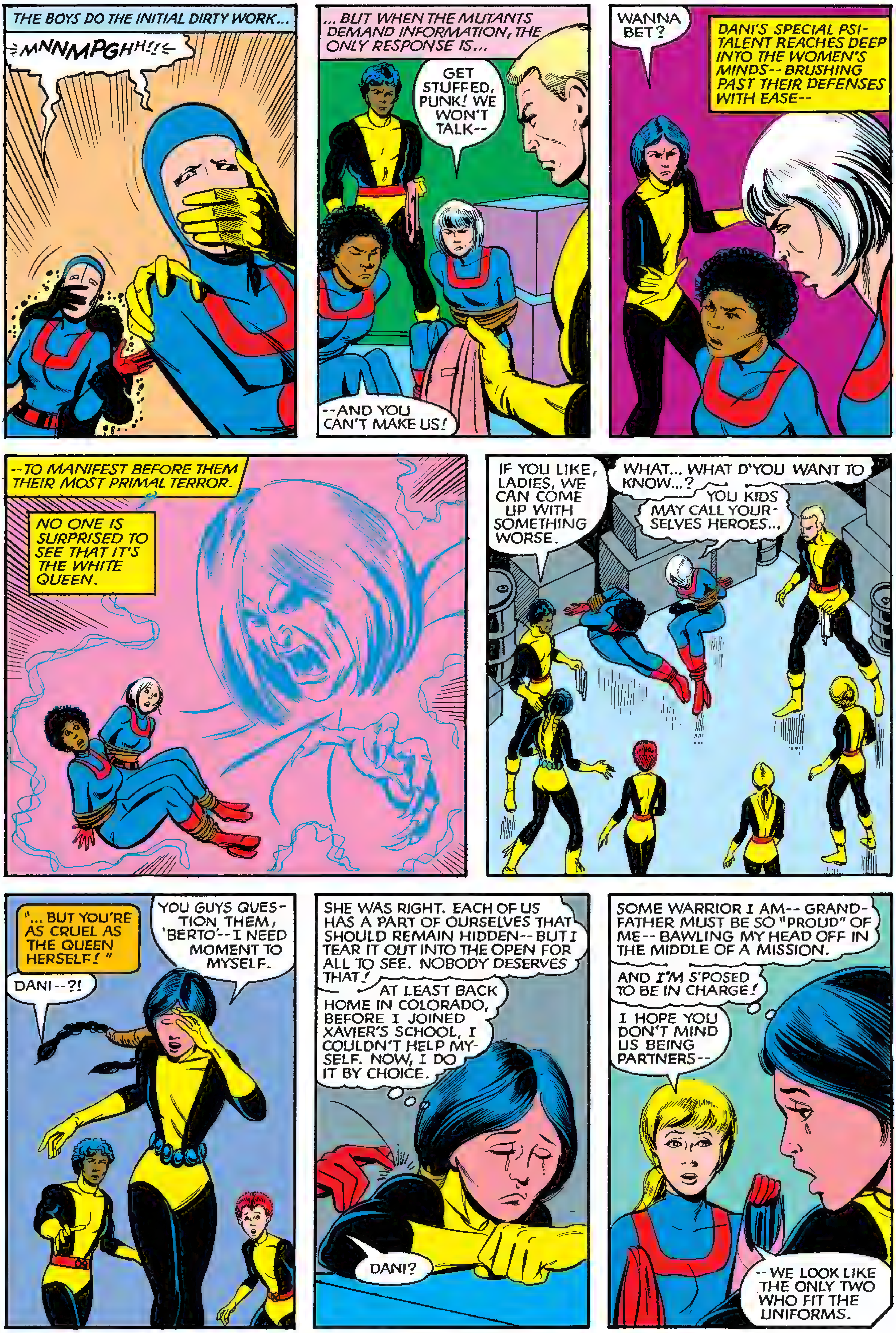

WELCOME, DEAR CHILDREN, TO MY PARLOR.
I AM THE WHITE QUEEN!
FROM THIS MOMENT, YOUR LIVES BELONG TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB.

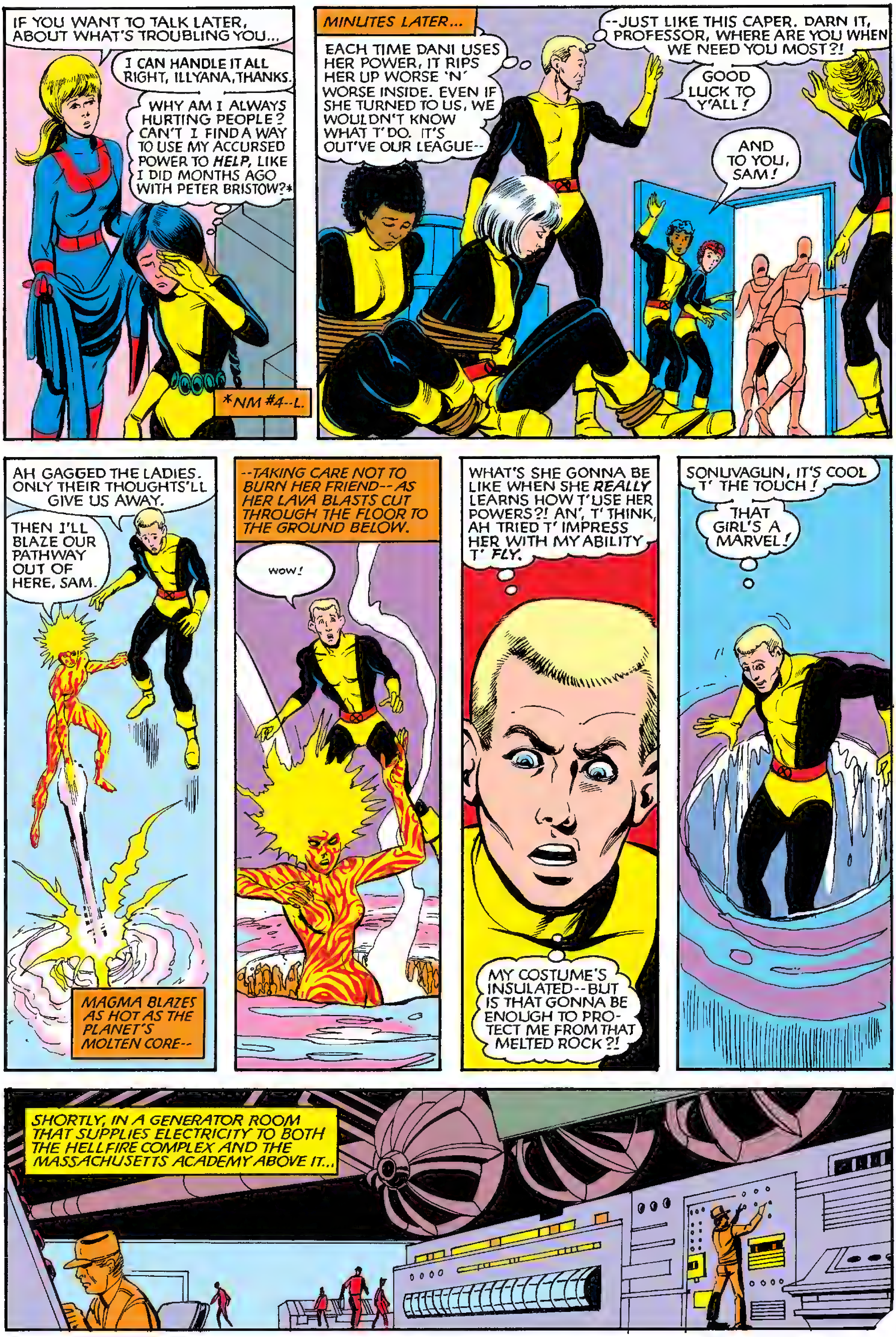

I BROUGHT THE *NEW MUTANTS* HERE, TO RESCUE KITTY PRYDE -- AND HER FRIEND, DOUG RAMSEY -- BUT, INSTEAD, I'VE LED THEM INTO A *TRAP!*
HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO *STUPID?!!*
*ILLYANA RASPUTIN IS A TELEPORTER -- ABLE TO MOVE THROUGH SPACE AND TIME -- BUT BEFORE SHE CAN SUMMON AN ENERGY FIELD TO SPIRIT HERSELF AND HER COMPANIONS AWAY...*
*...SAM GUTHRIE GIVES A SILENT CUE TO AMARA AQUILLA...*
*...WHO BLAZES BRIGHT AND HOT AS THE SUN...*
*...USING HER NASCENT CONTROL OVER THE EARTH'S MOLTEN CORE, THE MAGMA THAT IS HER NAMESAKE...*
*...TO TRIGGER A SUDDEN, DEVASTATING...*
*EARTH-QUAKE!*
*THE SCHOOL ABOVE IS UNAFFECTED BY THE VIOLENT TREMOR. BUT, THROUGHOUT THE SPRAWLING, UNDERGROUND COMPLEX, POWER CONDUITS ARE SEVERED...*
*...WITH PREDICTABLE RESULTS.*
*HOWEVER...*
I'VE KEYED IN THE EMERGENCY BACK-UPS...
EMERGENCY
--WE'VE GOT *LIGHTS!*
THE KIDS--
*--THEY'RE GONE!!*

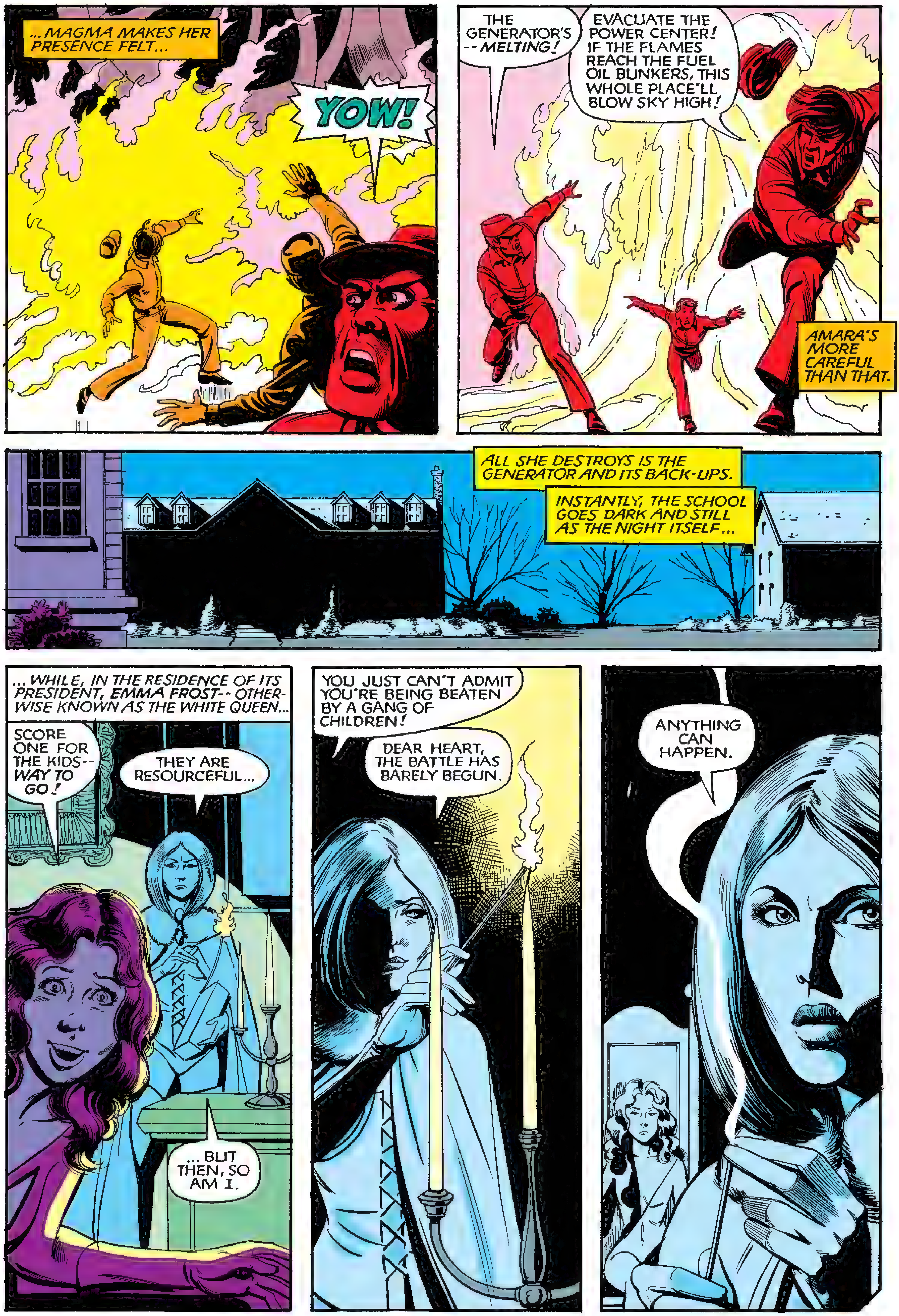

THE QUEEN AIN'T GONNA LIKE THIS, GIL.
WHAT'M I GONNA DO, ART, LIE?
SHE'S A MIND-READER, SHE PROBABLY KNOWS ALREADY.
*QUITE SO, GILBERT.*
WE'LL INSTITUTE AN IMMEDIATE PHASE-ONE SEARCH...
*NO. RETURN YOUR CADRES TO THEIR QUARTERS.*
I'LL DEAL WITH THIS SITUATION MYSELF.
FASCINATING -- THE GROUP'S GAINED SOME FORMIDABLE NEW MEMBERS SINCE YOUR MENTOR, *CHARLES XAVIER,* FIRST GATHERED THEM.
MISS PRYDE, STOP STRUGGLING.
THE PSYCHIC INHIBITORS I'VE PLACED IN YOUR BRAIN NOT ONLY DENY YOU THE USE OF YOUR PHASING ABILITY BUT MOST EFFECTIVELY PARALYZE YOU AS WELL.
NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY, YOU CANNOT MOVE UNTIL *I* LET YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THEM?
YOU'LL SOON SEE -- BUT I GUARANTEE THEY WON'T ESCAPE.
AND ONCE WE'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW EACH OTHER... BETTER, THEY WON'T WANT TO.
YOU'RE GOING TO BRAINWASH THEM, LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO DO ME!
WRONG, DEAR HEART -- AS I'VE ***SUCCEEDED*** WITH YOU.

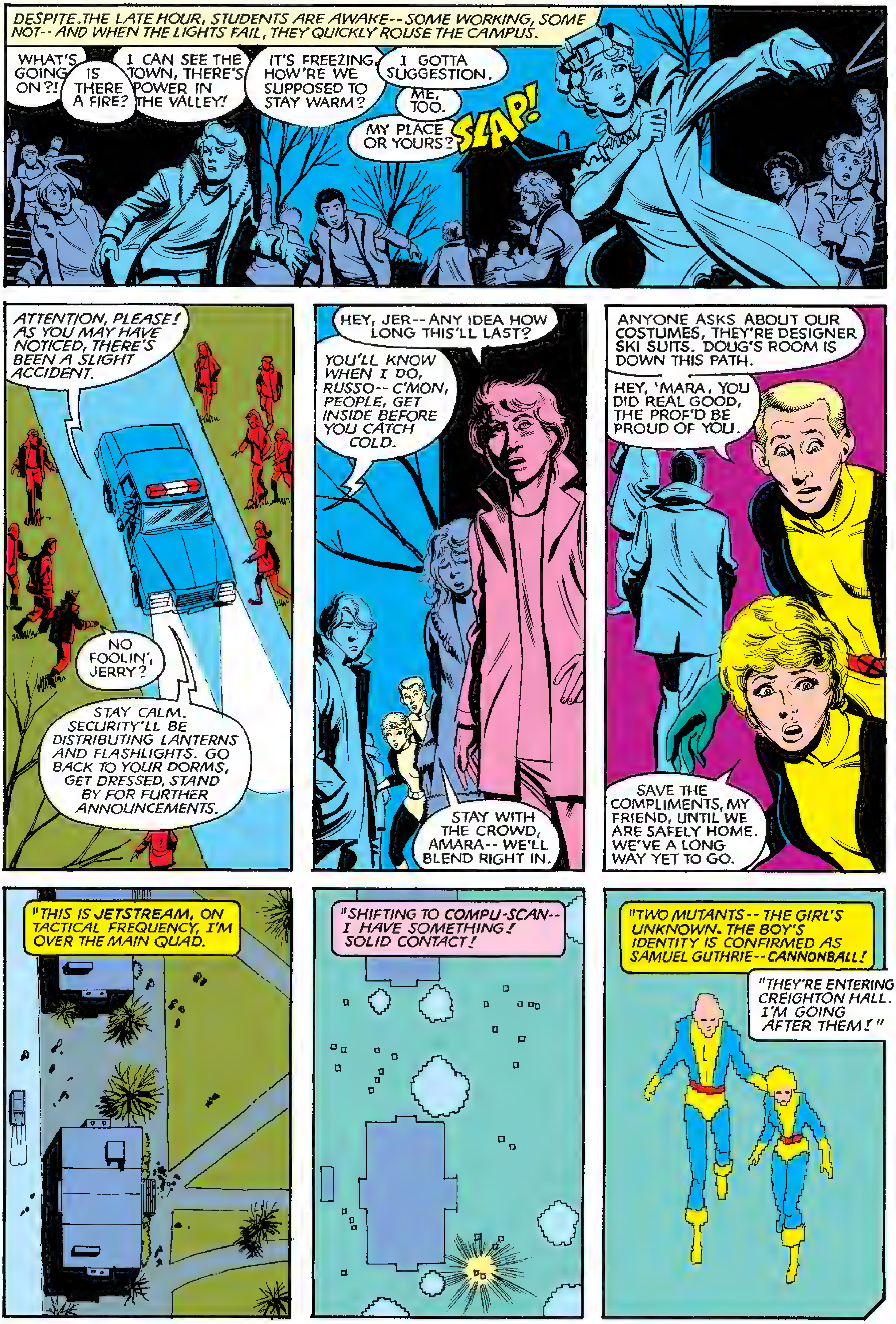

YOU SEE, KATHERINE, THE GOAL OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S *INNER CIRCLE* IS POWER-- SEBASTIAN SHAW AND I WISH TO RULE THE WORLD.
MUTANTS ARE A MEANS TO AN END.
WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT.
THERE ARE TOO MANY SUPER-BEINGS--MUTANTS AND OTHERWISE--PEOPLE HAVE BEGUN TO REALIZE THEIR VALUE. THE PERSON, GROUP, CORPORATION --COUNTRY--THAT POSSESSES THEM...
...HAS AN INCALCULABLE ADVANTAGE OVER THOSE THAT DON'T.
WE USED TO BE HATED, NOW WE ARE DESIRED--AND FOR THE SAME REASON, BECAUSE WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM HUMANITY. WE HAVE ABILITIES *HOMO SAPIENS* DOES NOT.
THEY STILL FEAR US--THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE-- BUT NOW THEY WISH TO USE US. AND THEY'LL DO WHATEVER THEY MUST TO PERSUADE US TO OBEY.
LIKE YOU THREATENING MY PARENTS?
GET USED TO IT, CHILD. I WON'T BE THE LAST.
YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER YOU WISH TO BE RULER--OR SLAVE.
ALL I WANT IS TO BE LEFT ALONE, TO LIVE MY LIFE IN PEACE, IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK ?!!
YOU LOST THAT OPTION...
...THE MOMENT YOU WERE BORN. IF YOU WISH TRUE FREEDOM, KATHERINE, END YOUR LIFE. THE GRAVE IS A MUTANT'S ONLY LASTING SANCTUARY.
IF YOU WILL NOT JOIN THE HELLFIRE CLUB WILLINGLY, YOU WILL BE FORCED. THE CHOICE, AS ALWAYS, IS YOURS.
LET'S HOPE YOUR COMPEERS PROFIT FROM YOUR EXAMPLE.

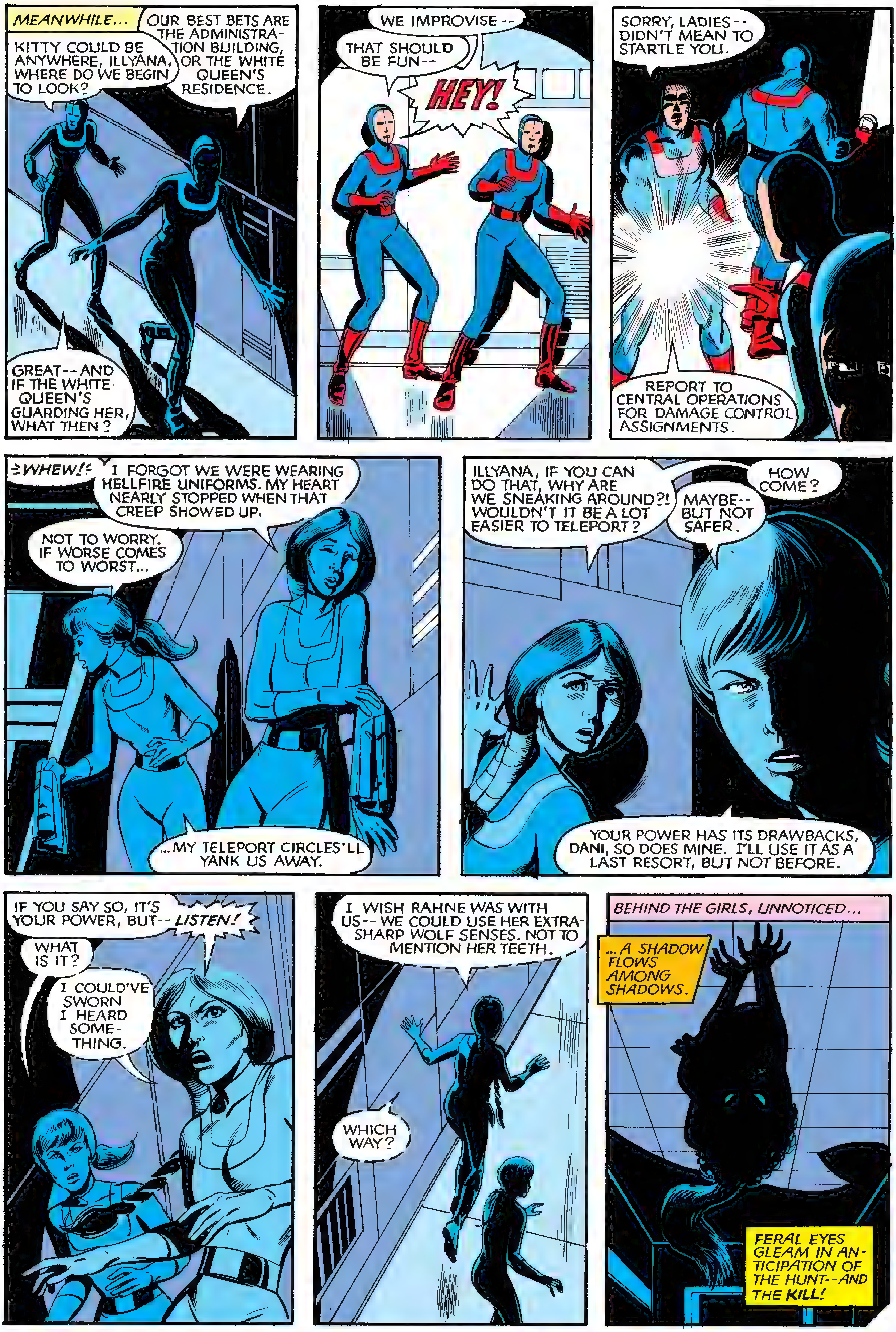

ELSEWHERE...
I CANNA SCENT ANYONE, DANI. THE COAST IS CLEAR.
GREAT, RAHNE. KEEP WATCH--LEMME KNOW IF WE GET COMPANY.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WE CAN'T STAY IN THIS STOREROOM FOREVER.
I KNOW, 'BERTO. ONCE THEY FINISH REPAIRING THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THAT 'QUAKE-- NICE WORK, AMY, THANKS-- THEIR SENSORS'LL PROBABLY SPOT US RIGHT OFF.
NOT IF WE KAYO THE MAIN GENERATOR FIRST.
AND WHAT THEN, SAM--IN THE CONFUSION WE SLIP IN, GRAB KITTY AND DOUG AND THEN RUN FOR HOME? THAT'S GOT POSSIBILITIES...
...IT MIGHT WORK.
TH' ONLY PROBLEM IS THE WHITE QUEEN. IT'S PRETTY HARD TO HIDE FROM-- MUCH LESS OUTWIT-- A TELEPATH.
IF SHE'S SO HOT, HOW COME WE'RE STILL ON THE LOOSE?
THERE'S A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KNOWING OUR PLANS, SAM, AND BEING ABLE TO STOP THEM. IF WE SEPARATE, SHE'LL HAVE TO SPLIT HER FORCES, TOO.
MOREOVER, PROFESSOR XAVIER IS THE STRONGEST PSI ON EARTH.
IF HE CAN'T READ MY THOUGHTS, NEITHER CAN SHE.
HE TAUGHT US TO SHIELD OURSELVES FROM PSI-SCANS, MY FRIEND, THAT SHOULD HELP.
AH GUESS SO, BOBBY-- AH HOPE SO.
HUSH, EV'RYONE-- *FOOTSTEPS!*
IT ISN'T A SEARCH PARTY, ONLY A COUPLE OF GUARDS.
*GRAB 'EM!*

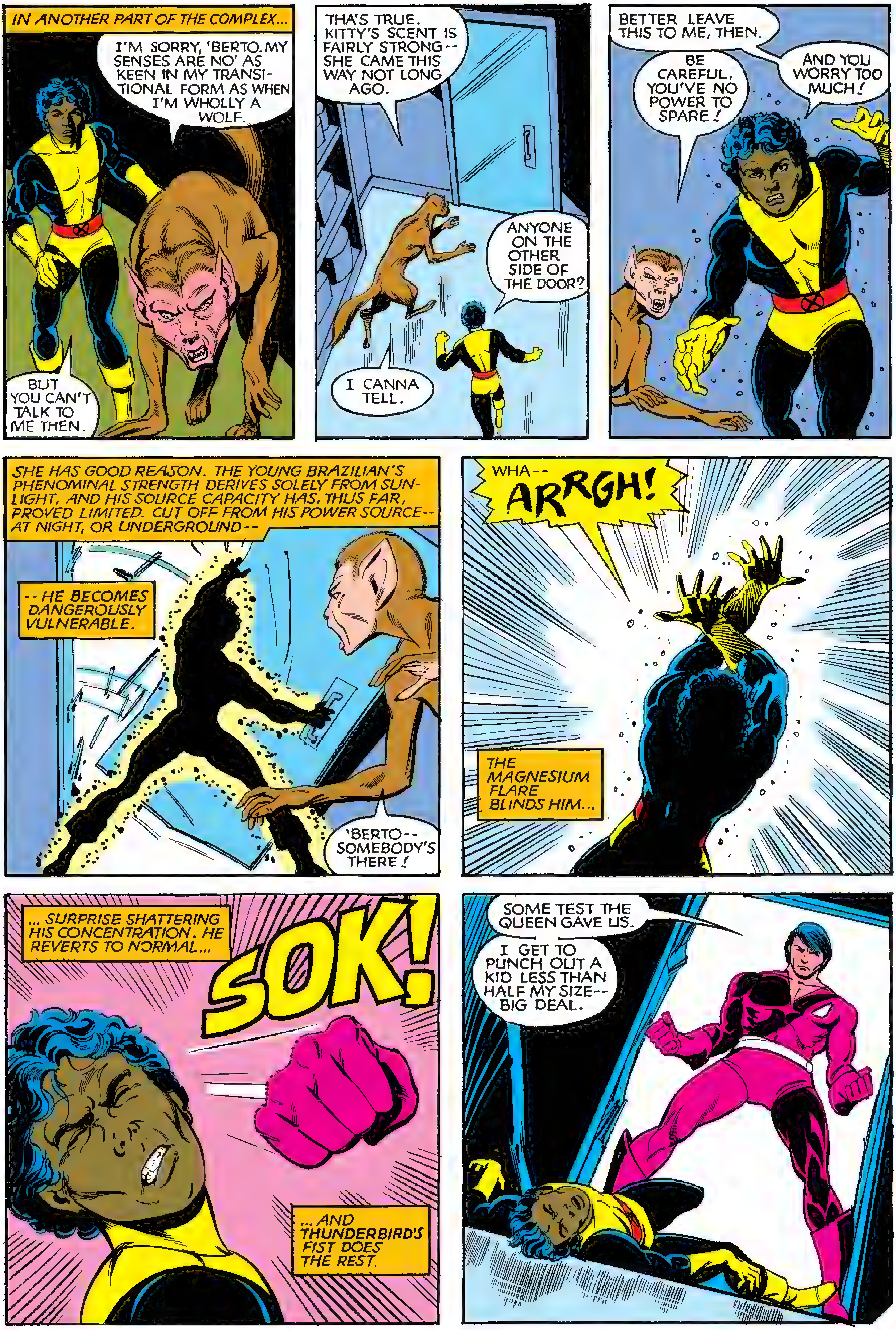

THE BOYS DO THE INITIAL DIRTY WORK...
MNNMPGHH!!
...BUT WHEN THE MUTANTS DEMAND INFORMATION, THE ONLY RESPONSE IS...
GET STUFFED, PUNK! WE WON'T TALK--
--AND YOU CAN'T MAKE US!
WANNA BET?
DANI'S SPECIAL PSI-TALENT REACHES DEEP INTO THE WOMEN'S MINDS--BRUSHING PAST THEIR DEFENSES WITH EASE--
--TO MANIFEST BEFORE THEM THEIR MOST PRIMAL TERROR.
NO ONE IS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT IT'S THE WHITE QUEEN.
IF YOU LIKE, LADIES, WE CAN COME UP WITH SOMETHING WORSE.
WHAT... WHAT D'YOU WANT TO KNOW...?
YOU KIDS MAY CALL YOURSELVES HEROES...
"...BUT YOU'RE AS CRUEL AS THE QUEEN HERSELF!"
DANI--?!
YOU GUYS QUESTION THEM, 'BERTO--I NEED MOMENT TO MYSELF.
SHE WAS RIGHT. EACH OF US HAS A PART OF OURSELVES THAT SHOULD REMAIN HIDDEN--BUT I TEAR IT OUT INTO THE OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE. NOBODY DESERVES THAT!
AT LEAST BACK HOME IN COLORADO, BEFORE I JOINED XAVIER'S SCHOOL, I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF. NOW, I DO IT BY CHOICE.
DANI?
SOME WARRIOR I AM--GRANDFATHER MUST BE SO "PROUD" OF ME--BAWLING MY HEAD OFF IN THE MIDDLE OF A MISSION.
AND I'M S'POSED TO BE IN CHARGE!
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND US BEING PARTNERS--
--WE LOOK LIKE THE ONLY TWO WHO FIT THE UNIFORMS.

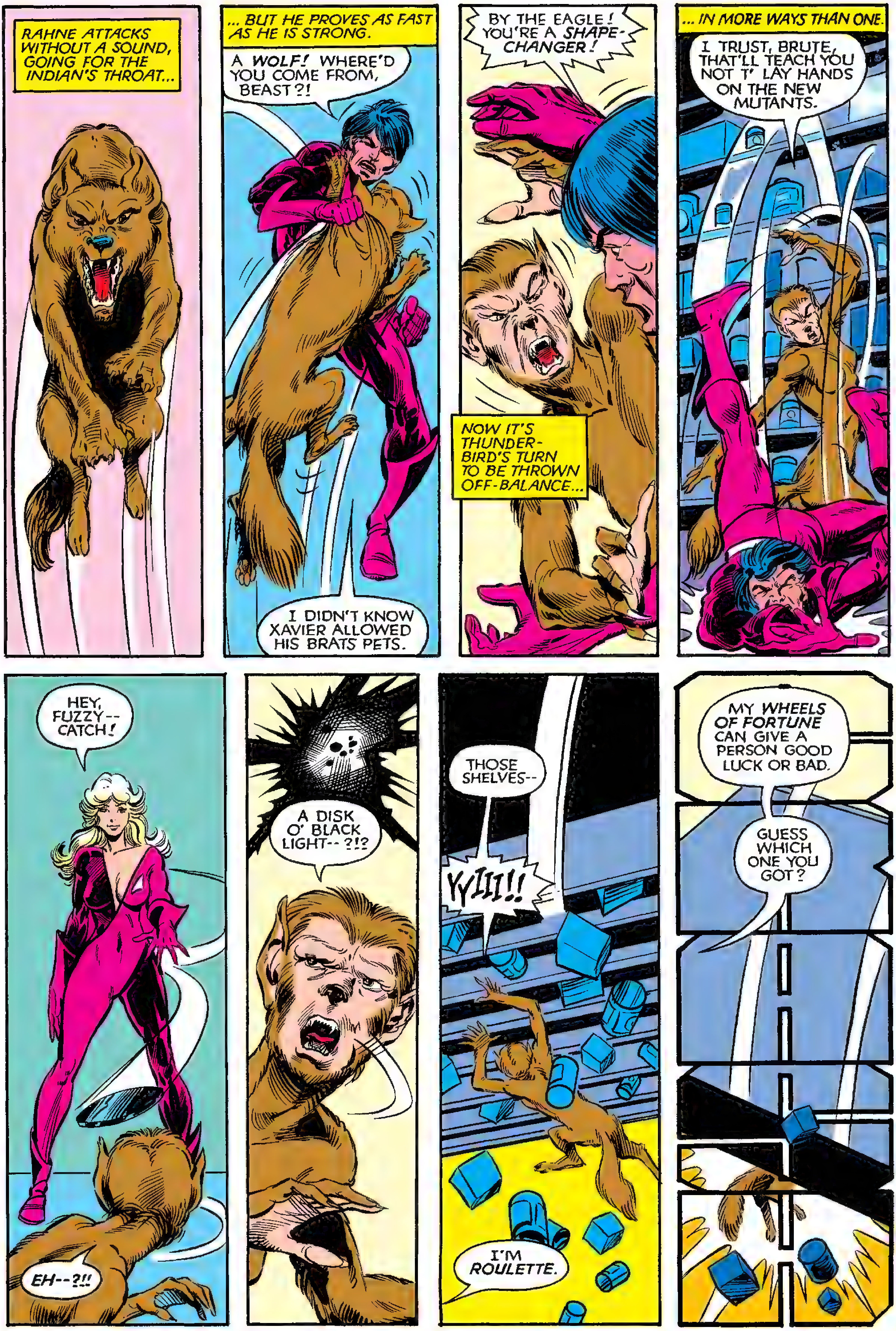

IF YOU WANT TO TALK LATER, ABOUT WHAT'S TROUBLING YOU...
I CAN HANDLE IT ALL RIGHT, ILLYANA, THANKS.
WHY AM I ALWAYS HURTING PEOPLE? CAN'T I FIND A WAY TO USE MY ACCURSED POWER TO *HELP*, LIKE I DID MONTHS AGO WITH PETER BRISTOW?*
*NM #4--L.
MINUTES LATER...
EACH TIME DANI USES HER POWER, IT RIPS HER UP WORSE 'N' WORSE INSIDE. EVEN IF SHE TURNED TO US, WE WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT T' DO. IT'S OUT'VE OUR LEAGUE--
--JUST LIKE THIS CAPER. DARN IT, PROFESSOR, WHERE ARE YOU WHEN WE NEED YOU MOST?!
GOOD LUCK TO Y'ALL!
AND TO YOU, SAM!
AH GAGGED THE LADIES. ONLY THEIR THOUGHTS'LL GIVE US AWAY.
THEN I'LL BLAZE OUR PATHWAY OUT OF HERE, SAM.
MAGMA BLAZES AS HOT AS THE PLANET'S MOLTEN CORE--
--TAKING CARE NOT TO BURN HER FRIEND--AS HER LAVA BLASTS CUT THROUGH THE FLOOR TO THE GROUND BELOW.
WOW!
WHAT'S SHE GONNA BE LIKE WHEN SHE *REALLY* LEARNS HOW T' USE HER POWERS?! AN', T' THINK, AH TRIED T' IMPRESS HER WITH MY ABILITY T' *FLY*.
MY COSTUME'S INSULATED--BUT IS THAT GONNA BE ENOUGH TO PROTECT ME FROM THAT MELTED ROCK?!
SONUVAGUN, IT'S COOL T' THE TOUCH!
THAT GIRL'S A MARVEL!
SHORTLY, IN A GENERATOR ROOM THAT SUPPLIES ELECTRICITY TO BOTH THE HELLFIRE COMPLEX AND THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY ABOVE IT...

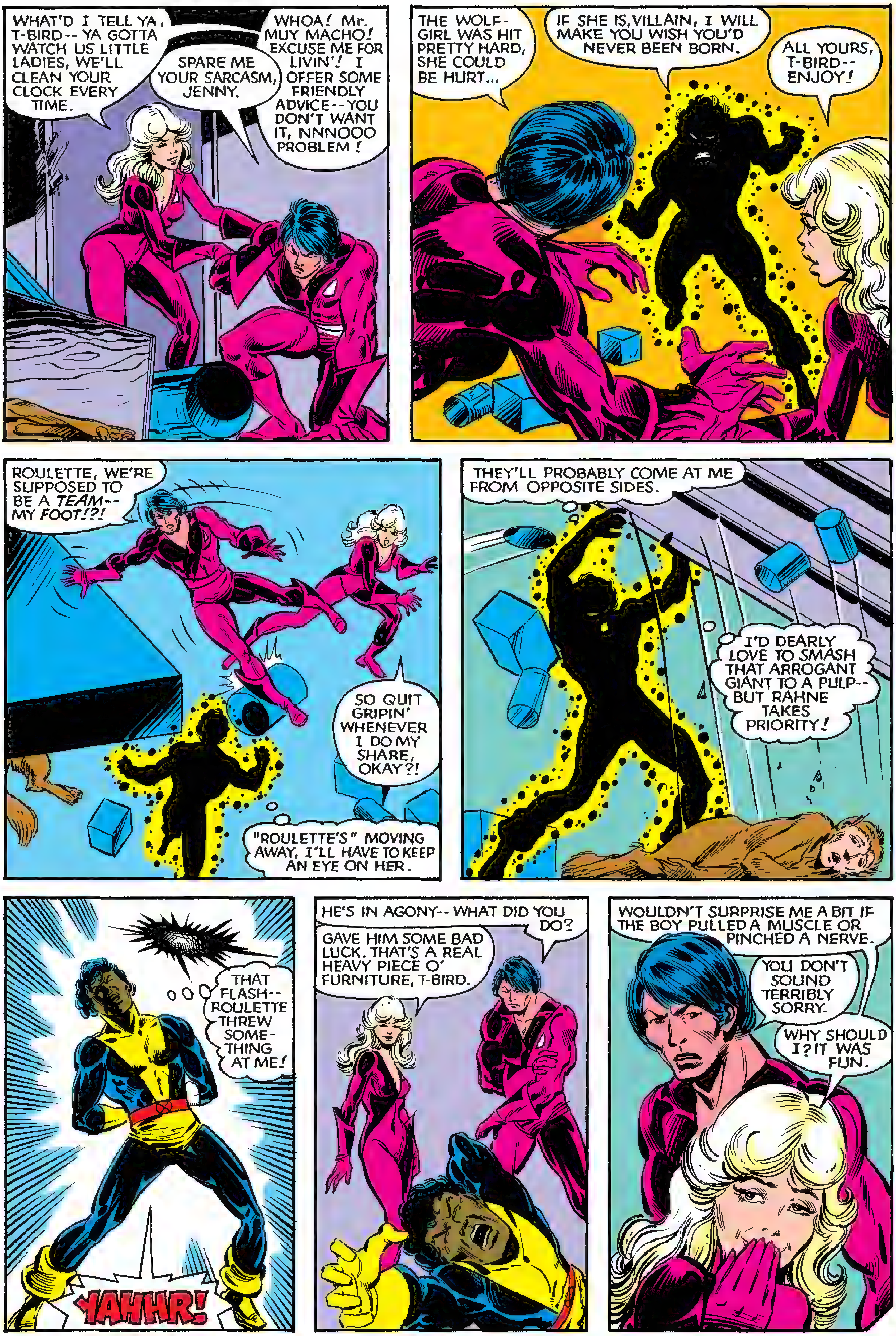

...MAGMA MAKES HER PRESENCE FELT...
YOW!
THE GENERATOR'S --MELTING!
EVACUATE THE POWER CENTER! IF THE FLAMES REACH THE FUEL OIL BUNKERS, THIS WHOLE PLACE'LL BLOW SKY HIGH!
AMARA'S MORE CAREFUL THAN THAT.
ALL SHE DESTROYS IS THE GENERATOR AND ITS BACK-UPS.
INSTANTLY, THE SCHOOL GOES DARK AND STILL AS THE NIGHT ITSELF...
...WHILE, IN THE RESIDENCE OF ITS PRESIDENT, EMMA FROST-- OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE WHITE QUEEN...
SCORE ONE FOR THE KIDS-- WAY TO GO!
THEY ARE RESOURCEFUL...
...BUT THEN, SO AM I.
YOU JUST CAN'T ADMIT YOU'RE BEING BEATEN BY A GANG OF CHILDREN!
DEAR HEART, THE BATTLE HAS BARELY BEGUN.
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.

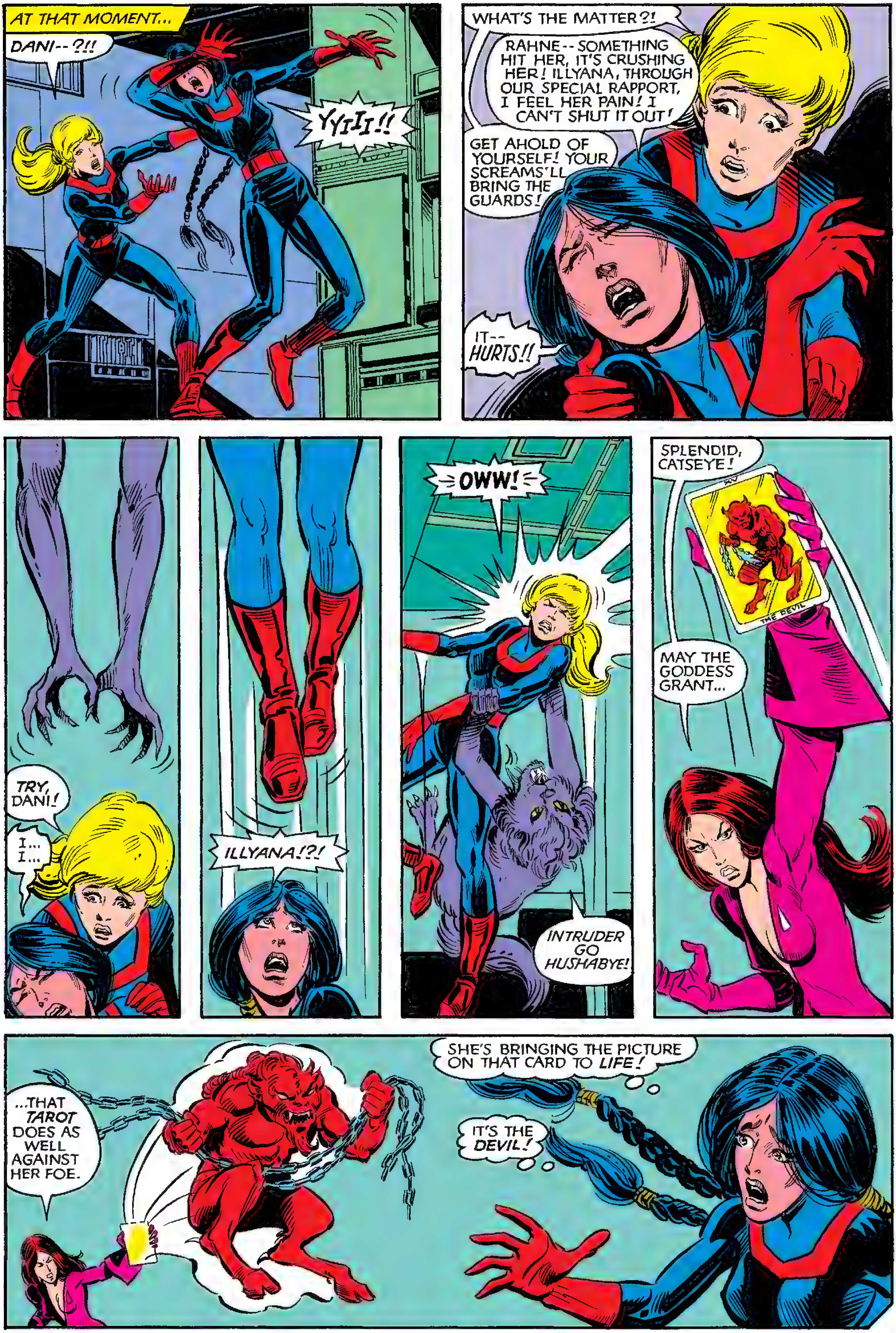

DESPITE THE LATE HOUR, STUDENTS ARE AWAKE-- SOME WORKING, SOME NOT-- AND WHEN THE LIGHTS FAIL, THEY QUICKLY ROUSE THE CAMPUS.
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
IS THERE A FIRE?
I CAN SEE THE TOWN, THERE'S POWER IN THE VALLEY!
IT'S FREEZING, HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED TO STAY WARM?
I GOTTA SUGGESTION.
ME, TOO.
MY PLACE OR YOURS?
SLAP!
ATTENTION, PLEASE! AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, THERE'S BEEN A SLIGHT ACCIDENT.
NO FOOLIN', JERRY?
STAY CALM. SECURITY'LL BE DISTRIBUTING LANTERNS AND FLASHLIGHTS. GO BACK TO YOUR DORMS, GET DRESSED, STAND BY FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS.
HEY, JER-- ANY IDEA HOW LONG THIS'LL LAST?
YOU'LL KNOW WHEN I DO, RUSSO-- C'MON, PEOPLE, GET INSIDE BEFORE YOU CATCH COLD.
STAY WITH THE CROWD, AMARA-- WE'LL BLEND RIGHT IN.
ANYONE ASKS ABOUT OUR COSTUMES, THEY'RE DESIGNER SKI SUITS. DOUG'S ROOM IS DOWN THIS PATH.
HEY, 'MARA, YOU DID REAL GOOD, THE PROF'D BE PROUD OF YOU.
SAVE THE COMPLIMENTS, MY FRIEND, UNTIL WE ARE SAFELY HOME. WE'VE A LONG WAY YET TO GO.
"THIS IS JETSTREAM, ON TACTICAL FREQUENCY. I'M OVER THE MAIN QUAD.
"SHIFTING TO COMPU-SCAN-- I HAVE SOMETHING! SOLID CONTACT!
"TWO MUTANTS-- THE GIRL'S UNKNOWN. THE BOY'S IDENTITY IS CONFIRMED AS SAMUEL GUTHRIE-- CANNONBALL!
"THEY'RE ENTERING CREIGHTON HALL. I'M GOING AFTER THEM!"

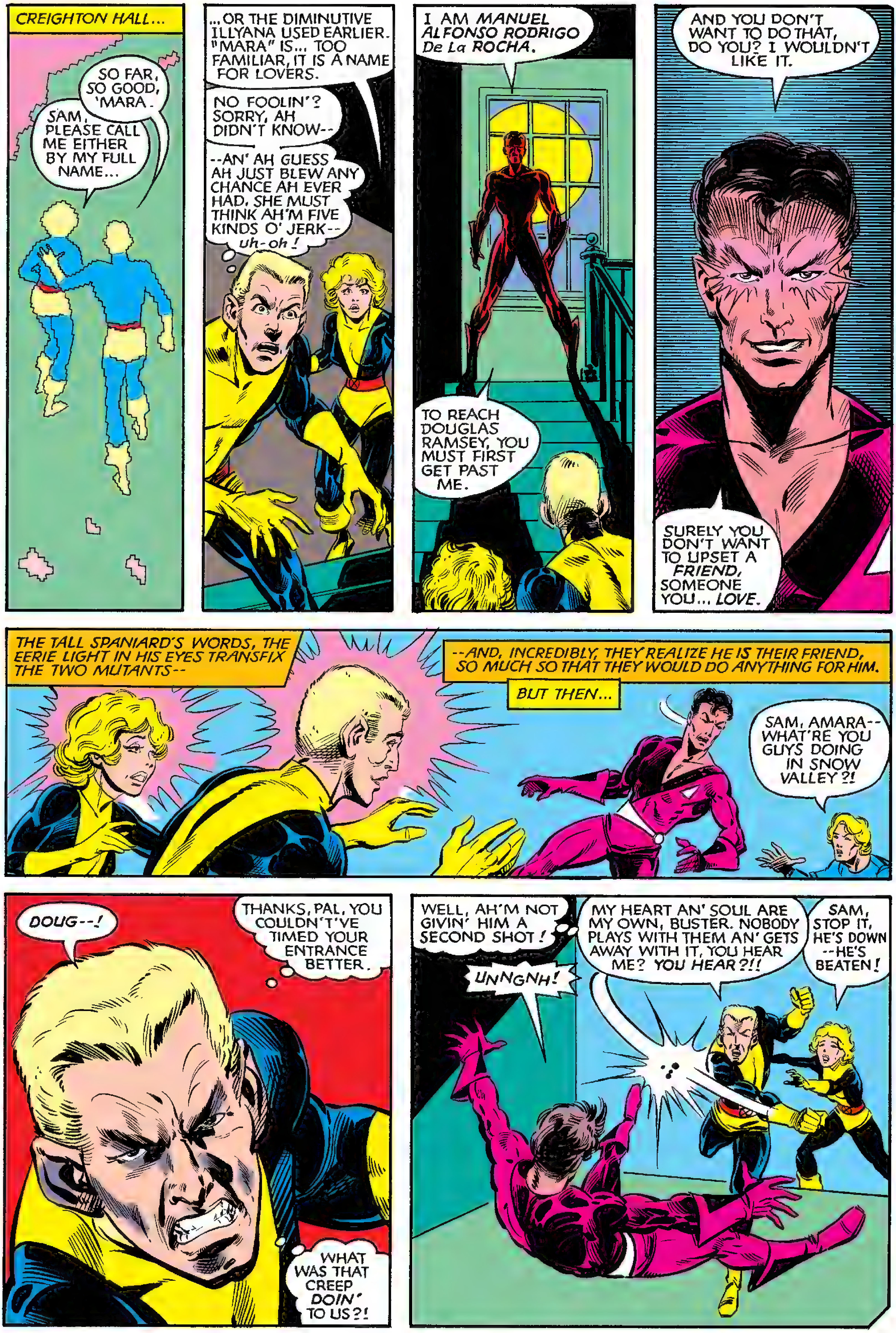

MEANWHILE...
KITTY COULD BE ANYWHERE, ILLYANA, WHERE DO WE BEGIN TO LOOK?
OUR BEST BETS ARE THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, OR THE WHITE QUEEN'S RESIDENCE.
GREAT-- AND IF THE WHITE QUEEN'S GUARDING HER, WHAT THEN?
WE IMPROVISE --
THAT SHOULD BE FUN--
HEY!
SORRY, LADIES -- DIDN'T MEAN TO STARTLE YOU.
REPORT TO CENTRAL OPERATIONS FOR DAMAGE CONTROL ASSIGNMENTS.
WHEW!
I FORGOT WE WERE WEARING HELLFIRE UNIFORMS. MY HEART NEARLY STOPPED WHEN THAT CREEP SHOWED UP.
NOT TO WORRY. IF WORSE COMES TO WORST...
...MY TELEPORT CIRCLES'LL YANK US AWAY.
ILLYANA, IF YOU CAN DO THAT, WHY ARE WE SNEAKING AROUND?! WOULDN'T IT BE A LOT EASIER TO TELEPORT?
MAYBE-- BUT NOT SAFER.
HOW COME?
YOUR POWER HAS ITS DRAWBACKS, DANI, SO DOES MINE. I'LL USE IT AS A LAST RESORT, BUT NOT BEFORE.
IF YOU SAY SO, IT'S YOUR POWER, BUT-- LISTEN!
WHAT IS IT?
I COULD'VE SWORN I HEARD SOMETHING.
I WISH RAHNE WAS WITH US-- WE COULD USE HER EXTRA-SHARP WOLF SENSES. NOT TO MENTION HER TEETH.
WHICH WAY?
BEHIND THE GIRLS, UNNOTICED...
...A SHADOW FLOWS AMONG SHADOWS.
FERAL EYES GLEAM IN ANTICIPATION OF THE HUNT--AND THE KILL!

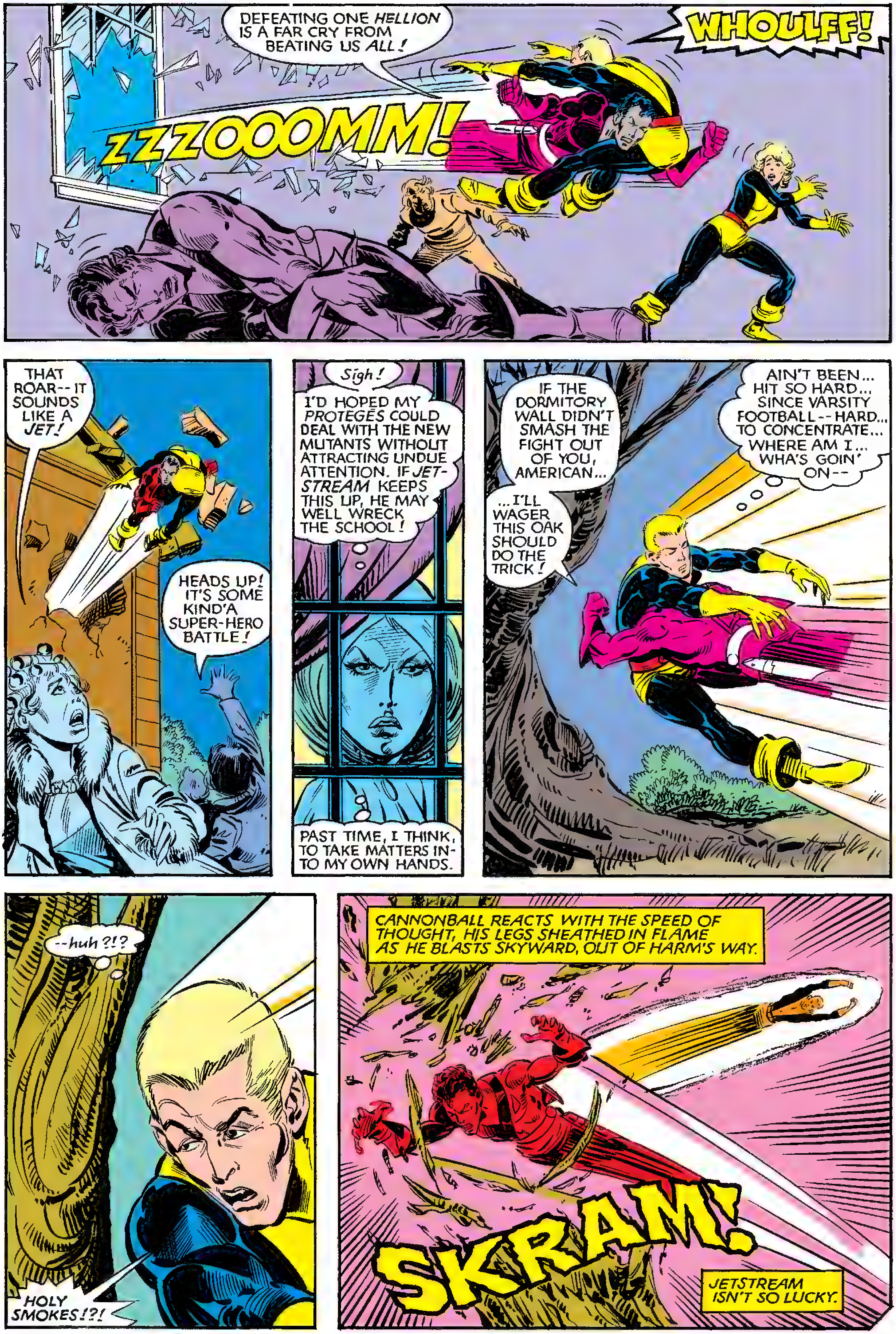

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE COMPLEX...
I'M SORRY, 'BERTO. MY SENSES ARE NO' AS KEEN IN MY TRANSITIONAL FORM AS WHEN I'M WHOLLY A WOLF.
BUT YOU CAN'T TALK TO ME THEN.
THA'S TRUE. KITTY'S SCENT IS FAIRLY STRONG-- SHE CAME THIS WAY NOT LONG AGO.
ANYONE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR?
I CANNA TELL.
BETTER LEAVE THIS TO ME, THEN.
AND YOU WORRY TOO MUCH!
BE CAREFUL. YOU'VE NO POWER TO SPARE!
SHE HAS GOOD REASON. THE YOUNG BRAZILIAN'S PHENOMINAL STRENGTH DERIVES SOLELY FROM SUNLIGHT, AND HIS SOURCE CAPACITY HAS, THUS FAR, PROVED LIMITED. CUT OFF FROM HIS POWER SOURCE-- AT NIGHT, OR UNDERGROUND--
--HE BECOMES DANGEROUSLY VULNERABLE.
'BERTO-- SOMEBODY'S THERE!
WHA-- ARRGH!
THE MAGNESIUM FLARE BLINDS HIM...
...SURPRISE SHATTERING HIS CONCENTRATION. HE REVERTS TO NORMAL...
SOK!
...AND THUNDERBIRD'S FIST DOES THE REST.
SOME TEST THE QUEEN GAVE US.
I GET TO PUNCH OUT A KID LESS THAN HALF MY SIZE-- BIG DEAL.

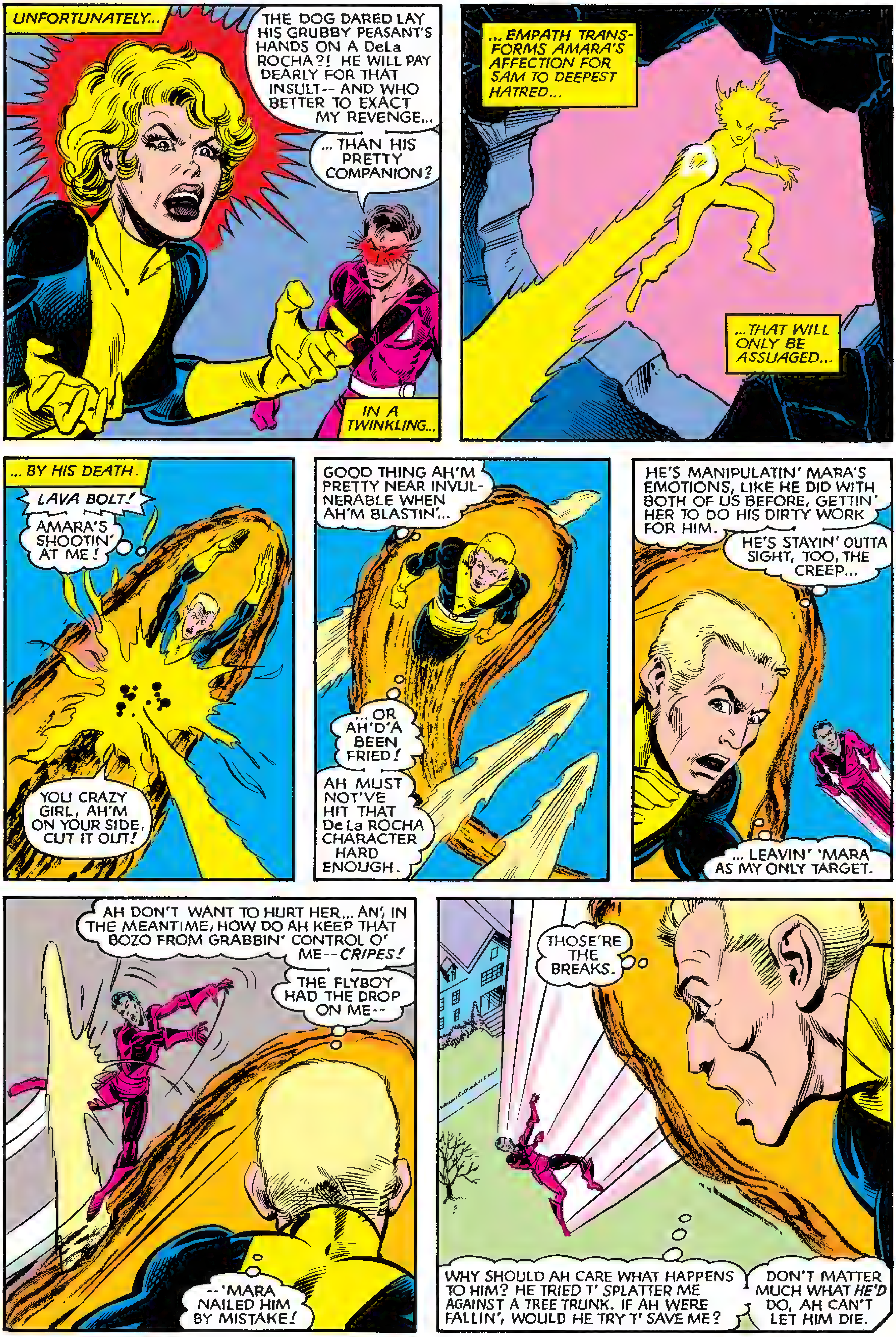

RAHNE ATTACKS WITHOUT A SOUND, GOING FOR THE INDIAN'S THROAT...
... BUT HE PROVES AS FAST AS HE IS STRONG.
A WOLF! WHERE'D YOU COME FROM, BEAST?!
I DIDN'T KNOW XAVIER ALLOWED HIS BRATS PETS.
BY THE EAGLE! YOU'RE A SHAPE-CHANGER!
NOW IT'S THUNDERBIRD'S TURN TO BE THROWN OFF-BALANCE...
... IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.
I TRUST, BRUTE, THAT'LL TEACH YOU NOT T' LAY HANDS ON THE NEW MUTANTS.
HEY, FUZZY-- CATCH!
EH--?!!
A DISK O' BLACK LIGHT-- ?!?
THOSE SHELVES--
YYIII!!
I'M ROULETTE.
MY WHEELS OF FORTUNE CAN GIVE A PERSON GOOD LUCK OR BAD.
GUESS WHICH ONE YOU GOT?

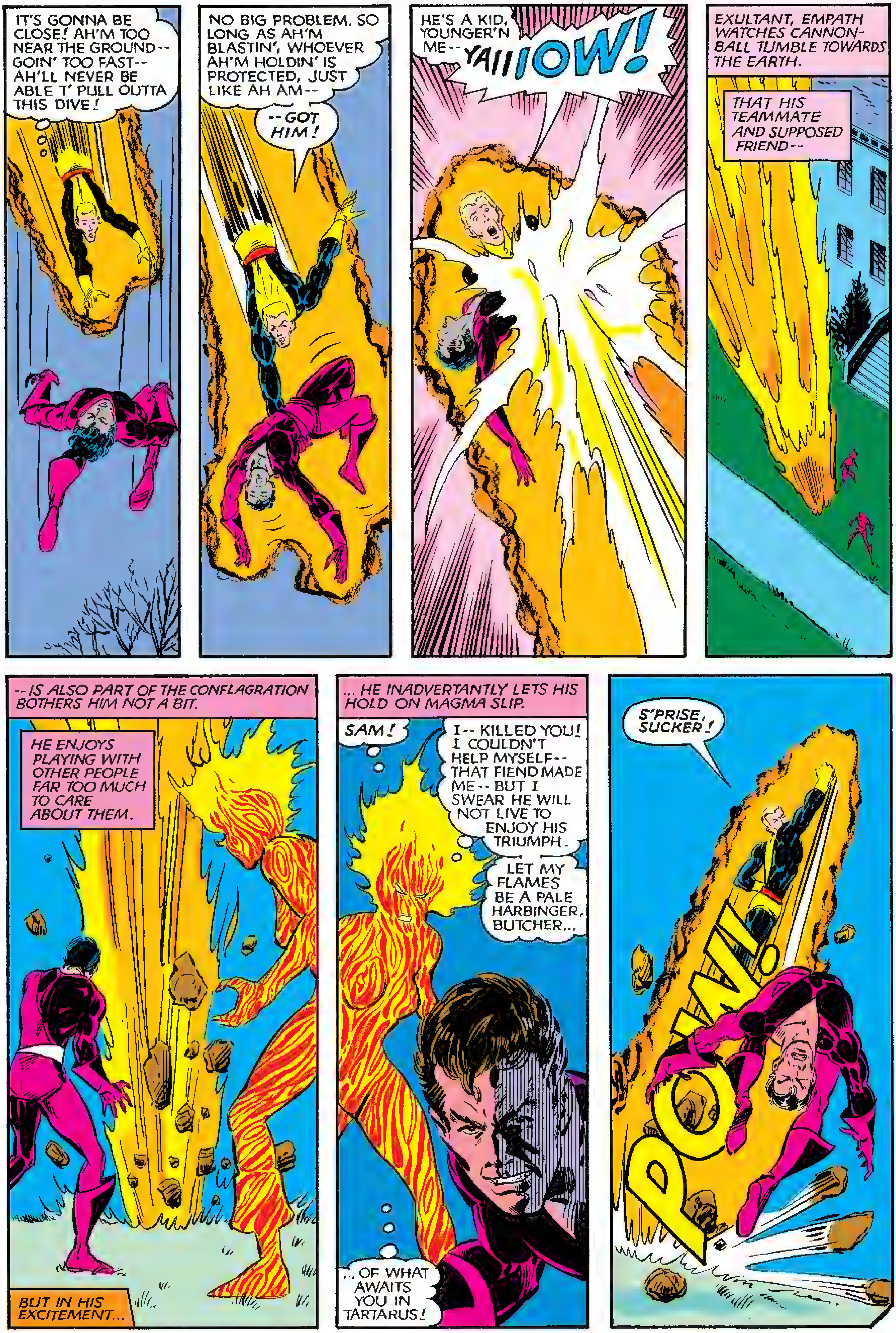

WHAT'D I TELL YA, T-BIRD-- YA GOTTA WATCH US LITTLE LADIES, WE'LL CLEAN YOUR CLOCK EVERY TIME.
SPARE ME YOUR SARCASM, JENNY.
WHOA! Mr. MUY MACHO! EXCUSE ME FOR LIVIN'! I OFFER SOME FRIENDLY ADVICE--YOU DON'T WANT IT, NNNOOO PROBLEM!
THE WOLF-GIRL WAS HIT PRETTY HARD, SHE COULD BE HURT...
IF SHE IS, VILLAIN, I WILL MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORN.
ALL YOURS, T-BIRD-- ENJOY!
ROULETTE, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A *TEAM*-- MY *FOOT!?!*
SO QUIT GRIPIN' WHENEVER I DO MY SHARE, OKAY?!
"ROULETTE'S" MOVING AWAY, I'LL HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON HER.
THEY'LL PROBABLY COME AT ME FROM OPPOSITE SIDES.
I'D DEARLY LOVE TO SMASH THAT ARROGANT GIANT TO A PULP-- BUT RAHNE TAKES PRIORITY!
THAT FLASH-- ROULETTE THREW SOME-THING AT ME!
YAHHR!
HE'S IN AGONY-- WHAT DID YOU DO?
GAVE HIM SOME BAD LUCK. THAT'S A REAL HEAVY PIECE O' FURNITURE, T-BIRD.
WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME A BIT IF THE BOY PULLED A MUSCLE OR PINCHED A NERVE.
YOU DON'T SOUND TERRIBLY SORRY.
WHY SHOULD I? IT WAS FUN.

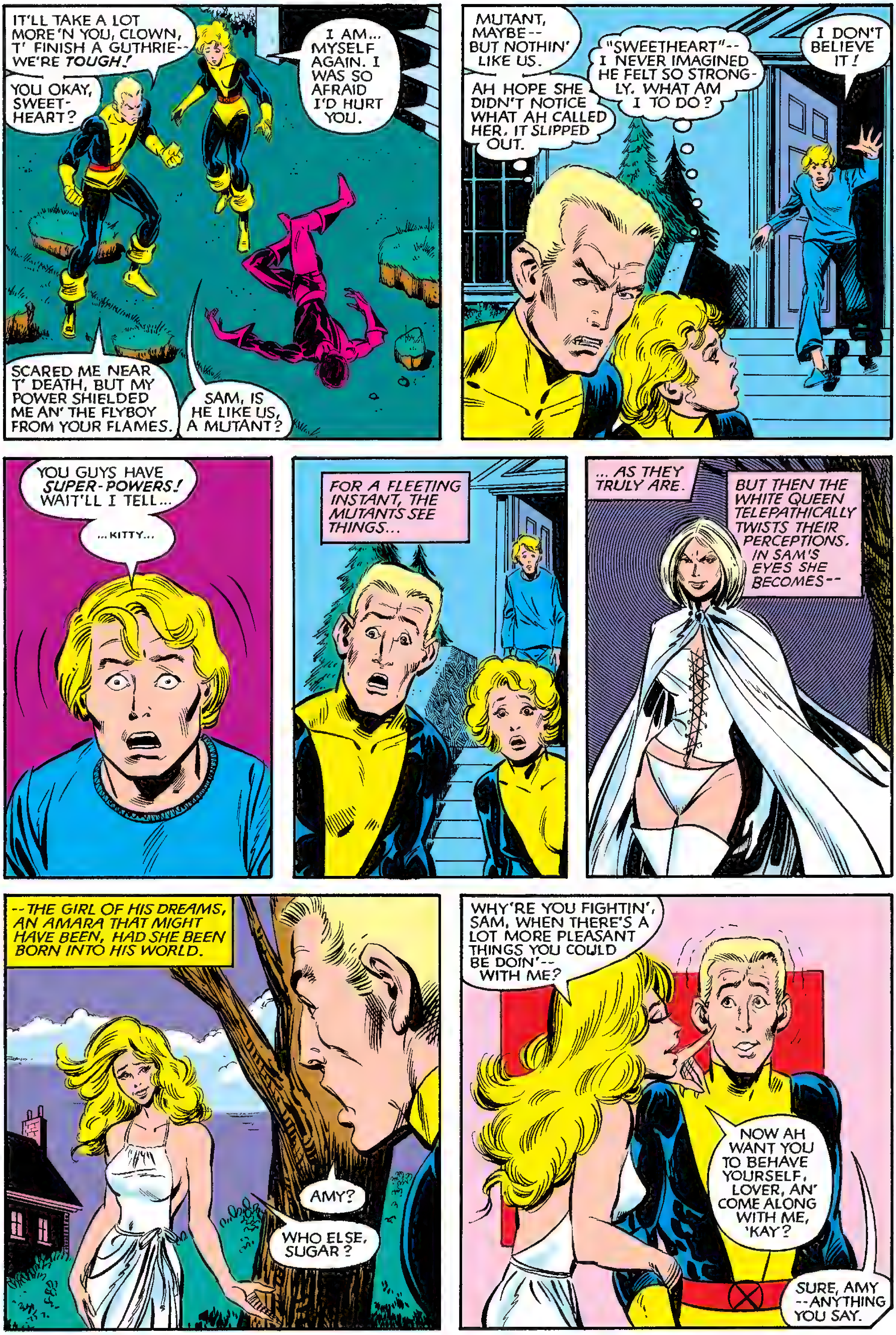

AT THAT MOMENT...
DANI--?!!
YYIII!!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
RAHNE--SOMETHING HIT HER, IT'S CRUSHING HER! ILLYANA, THROUGH OUR SPECIAL RAPPORT, I FEEL HER PAIN! I CAN'T SHUT IT OUT!
GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF! YOUR SCREAMS'LL BRING THE GUARDS!
IT-- HURTS!!
TRY, DANI!
I... I...
ILLYANA!?!
OWW!
INTRUDER GO HUSHABYE!
SPLENDID, CATSEYE!
THE DEVIL
MAY THE GODDESS GRANT...
...THAT TAROT DOES AS WELL AGAINST HER FOE.
SHE'S BRINGING THE PICTURE ON THAT CARD TO LIFE!
IT'S THE DEVIL!

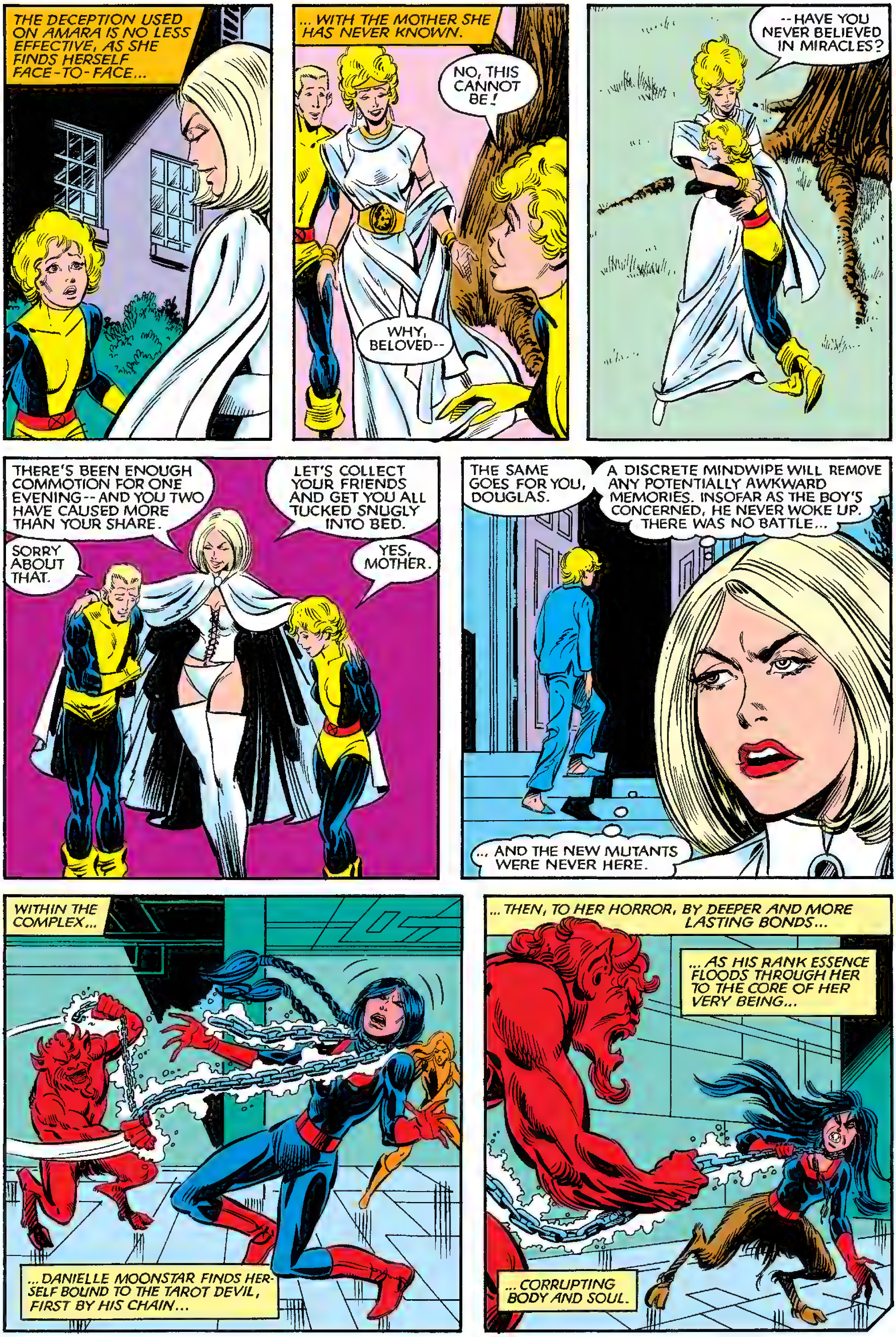

CREIGHTON HALL...
SO FAR, SO GOOD, 'MARA'.
SAM, PLEASE CALL ME EITHER BY MY FULL NAME...
...OR THE DIMINUTIVE ILLYANA USED EARLIER. "MARA" IS... TOO FAMILIAR, IT IS A NAME FOR LOVERS.
NO FOOLIN'? SORRY, AH DIDN'T KNOW--
--AN' AH GUESS AH JUST BLEW ANY CHANCE AH EVER HAD. SHE MUST THINK AH'M FIVE KINDS O' JERK-- uh-oh!
I AM MANUEL ALFONSO RODRIGO De La ROCHA.
TO REACH DOUGLAS RAMSEY, YOU MUST FIRST GET PAST ME.
AND YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT, DO YOU? I WOULDN'T LIKE IT.
SURELY YOU DON'T WANT TO UPSET A FRIEND, SOMEONE YOU... LOVE.
THE TALL SPANIARD'S WORDS, THE EERIE LIGHT IN HIS EYES TRANSFIX THE TWO MUTANTS--
--AND, INCREDIBLY, THEY REALIZE HE IS THEIR FRIEND, SO MUCH SO THAT THEY WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR HIM.
BUT THEN...
SAM, AMARA--WHAT'RE YOU GUYS DOING IN SNOW VALLEY?!
DOUG--!
THANKS, PAL, YOU COULDN'T'VE TIMED YOUR ENTRANCE BETTER.
WHAT WAS THAT CREEP DOIN' TO US?!
WELL, AH'M NOT GIVIN' HIM A SECOND SHOT!
UNNGNH!
MY HEART AN' SOUL ARE MY OWN, BUSTER. NOBODY PLAYS WITH THEM AN' GETS AWAY WITH IT, YOU HEAR ME? YOU HEAR?!!
SAM, STOP IT, HE'S DOWN--HE'S BEATEN!

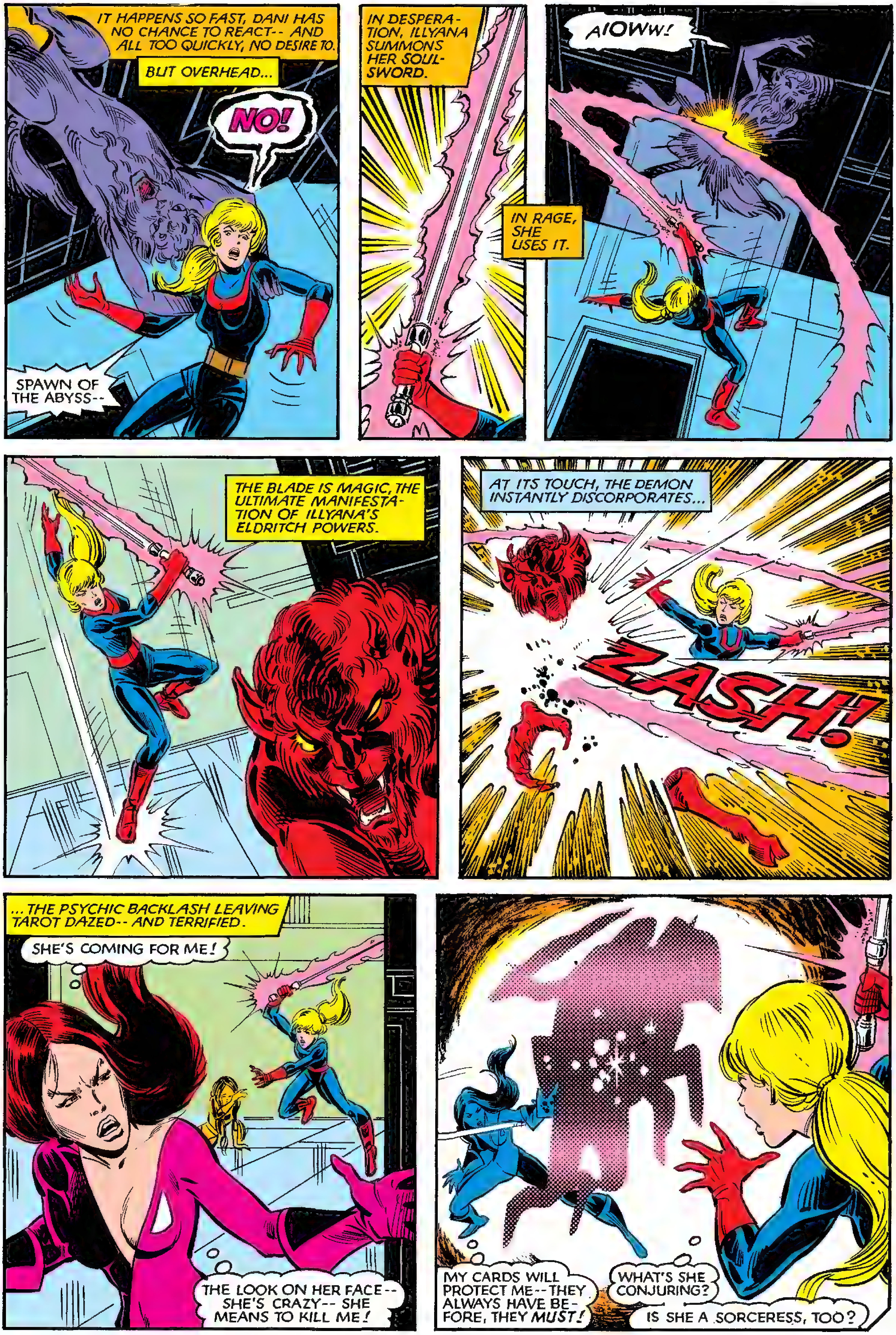

DEFEATING ONE *HELLION* IS A FAR CRY FROM BEATING US *ALL!*
WHOULFF!
ZZZOOOMM!
THAT ROAR-- IT SOUNDS LIKE A *JET!*
HEADS UP! IT'S SOME KIND'A SUPER-HERO BATTLE!
*Sigh!*
I'D HOPED MY *PROTEGES* COULD DEAL WITH THE NEW MUTANTS WITHOUT ATTRACTING UNDUE ATTENTION. IF *JETSTREAM* KEEPS THIS UP, HE MAY WELL WRECK THE SCHOOL!
PAST TIME, I THINK, TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS.
IF THE DORMITORY WALL DIDN'T SMASH THE FIGHT OUT OF YOU, AMERICAN...
...I'LL WAGER THIS OAK SHOULD DO THE TRICK!
AIN'T BEEN... HIT SO HARD... SINCE VARSITY FOOTBALL-- HARD... TO CONCENTRATE... WHERE AM I... WHA'S GOIN' ON--
--*huh?!?*
HOLY SMOKES!?!
CANNONBALL REACTS WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT, HIS LEGS SHEATHED IN FLAME AS HE BLASTS SKYWARD, OUT OF HARM'S WAY.
SKRAM!
JETSTREAM ISN'T SO LUCKY.

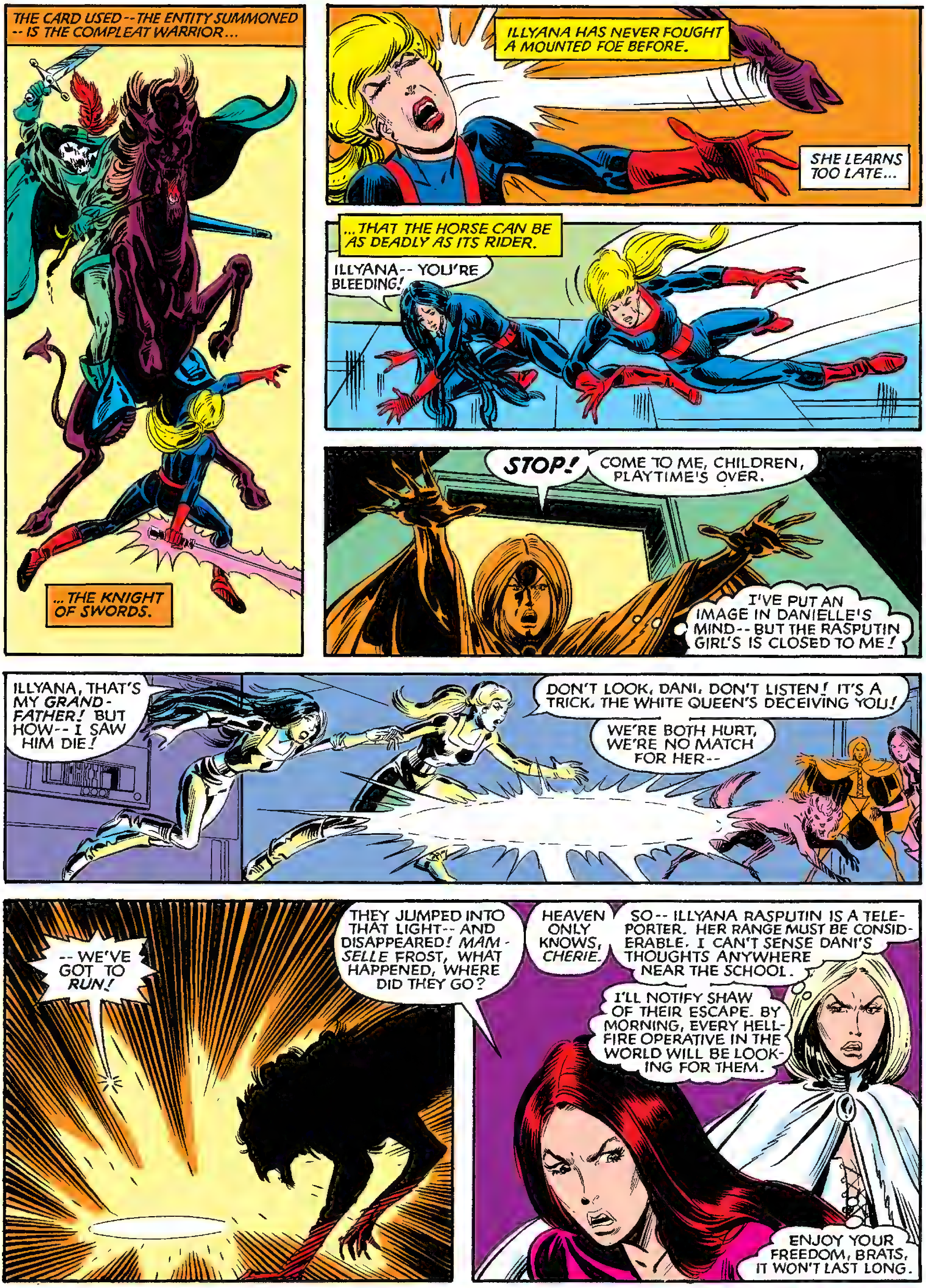

UNFORTUNATELY...
THE DOG DARED LAY HIS GRUBBY PEASANT'S HANDS ON A DeLa ROCHA?! HE WILL PAY DEARLY FOR THAT INSULT-- AND WHO BETTER TO EXACT MY REVENGE...
... THAN HIS PRETTY COMPANION?
IN A TWINKLING...
... EMPATH TRANSFORMS AMARA'S AFFECTION FOR SAM TO DEEPEST HATRED...
... THAT WILL ONLY BE ASSUAGED...
... BY HIS DEATH.
LAVA BOLT!
AMARA'S SHOOTIN' AT ME!
YOU CRAZY GIRL, AH'M ON YOUR SIDE, CUT IT OUT!
GOOD THING AH'M PRETTY NEAR INVULNERABLE WHEN AH'M BLASTIN'...
... OR AH'D'A BEEN FRIED!
AH MUST NOT'VE HIT THAT De La ROCHA CHARACTER HARD ENOUGH.
HE'S MANIPULATIN' MARA'S EMOTIONS, LIKE HE DID WITH BOTH OF US BEFORE, GETTIN' HER TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK FOR HIM.
HE'S STAYIN' OUTTA SIGHT, TOO, THE CREEP...
... LEAVIN' 'MARA AS MY ONLY TARGET.
AH DON'T WANT TO HURT HER... AN', IN THE MEANTIME, HOW DO AH KEEP THAT BOZO FROM GRABBIN' CONTROL O' ME-- CRIPES!
THE FLYBOY HAD THE DROP ON ME--
--'MARA NAILED HIM BY MISTAKE!
THOSE'RE THE BREAKS.
WHY SHOULD AH CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM? HE TRIED T' SPLATTER ME AGAINST A TREE TRUNK. IF AH WERE FALLIN', WOULD HE TRY T' SAVE ME?
DON'T MATTER MUCH WHAT HE'D DO, AH CAN'T LET HIM DIE.


IT'S GONNA BE CLOSE! AH'M TOO NEAR THE GROUND-- GOIN' TOO FAST-- AH'LL NEVER BE ABLE T' PULL OUTTA THIS DIVE!
NO BIG PROBLEM. SO LONG AS AH'M BLASTIN', WHOEVER AH'M HOLDIN' IS PROTECTED, JUST LIKE AH AM--
--GOT HIM!
HE'S A KID, YOUNGER'N ME--
YAIIIOW!
EXULTANT, EMPATH WATCHES CANNON-BALL TUMBLE TOWARDS THE EARTH.
THAT HIS TEAMMATE AND SUPPOSED FRIEND--
--IS ALSO PART OF THE CONFLAGRATION BOTHERS HIM NOT A BIT.
HE ENJOYS PLAYING WITH OTHER PEOPLE FAR TOO MUCH TO CARE ABOUT THEM.
BUT IN HIS EXCITEMENT...
...HE INADVERTANTLY LETS HIS HOLD ON MAGMA SLIP.
SAM!
I-- KILLED YOU! I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF-- THAT FIEND MADE ME-- BUT I SWEAR HE WILL NOT LIVE TO ENJOY HIS TRIUMPH.
LET MY FLAMES BE A PALE HARBINGER, BUTCHER...
...OF WHAT AWAITS YOU IN TARTARUS!
S'PRISE, SUCKER!
POW!


IT'LL TAKE A LOT MORE 'N YOU, CLOWN, T' FINISH A GUTHRIE-- WE'RE *TOUGH!*
YOU OKAY, SWEET-HEART?
I AM... MYSELF AGAIN. I WAS SO AFRAID I'D HURT YOU.
SCARED ME NEAR T' DEATH, BUT MY POWER SHIELDED ME AN' THE FLYBOY FROM YOUR FLAMES.
SAM, IS HE LIKE US, A MUTANT?
MUTANT, MAYBE-- BUT NOTHIN' LIKE US.
AH HOPE SHE DIDN'T NOTICE WHAT AH CALLED HER. IT SLIPPED OUT.
"SWEETHEART"-- I NEVER IMAGINED HE FELT SO STRONG-LY. WHAT AM I TO DO?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU GUYS HAVE *SUPER-POWERS!* WAIT'LL I TELL...
...KITTY...
*FOR A FLEETING INSTANT, THE MUTANTS SEE THINGS...*
*...AS THEY TRULY ARE.*
*BUT THEN THE WHITE QUEEN TELEPATHICALLY TWISTS THEIR PERCEPTIONS. IN SAM'S EYES SHE BECOMES--*
*--THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS, AN AMARA THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HAD SHE BEEN BORN INTO HIS WORLD.*
AMY?
WHO ELSE, SUGAR?
WHY'RE YOU FIGHTIN', SAM, WHEN THERE'S A LOT MORE PLEASANT THINGS YOU COULD BE DOIN'-- WITH ME?
NOW AH WANT YOU TO BEHAVE YOURSELF, LOVER, AN' COME ALONG WITH ME, 'KAY?
SURE, AMY --ANYTHING YOU SAY.


THE DECEPTION USED ON AMARA IS NO LESS EFFECTIVE, AS SHE FINDS HERSELF FACE-TO-FACE...
...WITH THE MOTHER SHE HAS NEVER KNOWN.
NO, THIS CANNOT BE!
WHY, BELOVED--
--HAVE YOU NEVER BELIEVED IN MIRACLES?
THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH COMMOTION FOR ONE EVENING--AND YOU TWO HAVE CAUSED MORE THAN YOUR SHARE.
LET'S COLLECT YOUR FRIENDS AND GET YOU ALL TUCKED SNUGLY INTO BED.
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
YES, MOTHER.
THE SAME GOES FOR YOU, DOUGLAS.
A DISCRETE MINDWIPE WILL REMOVE ANY POTENTIALLY AWKWARD MEMORIES. INSOFAR AS THE BOY'S CONCERNED, HE NEVER WOKE UP. THERE WAS NO BATTLE...
...AND THE NEW MUTANTS WERE NEVER HERE.
WITHIN THE COMPLEX...
...DANIELLE MOONSTAR FINDS HERSELF BOUND TO THE TAROT DEVIL, FIRST BY HIS CHAIN...
...THEN, TO HER HORROR, BY DEEPER AND MORE LASTING BONDS...
...AS HIS RANK ESSENCE FLOODS THROUGH HER TO THE CORE OF HER VERY BEING...
...CORRUPTING BODY AND SOUL.


IT HAPPENS SO FAST, DANI HAS NO CHANCE TO REACT-- AND ALL TOO QUICKLY, NO DESIRE TO.
BUT OVERHEAD...
NO!
SPAWN OF THE ABYSS--
IN DESPERATION, ILLYANA SUMMONS HER SOUL-SWORD.
AIOWW!
IN RAGE, SHE USES IT.
THE BLADE IS MAGIC, THE ULTIMATE MANIFESTATION OF ILLYANA'S ELDRITCH POWERS.
AT ITS TOUCH, THE DEMON INSTANTLY DISCORPORATES...
ZASH!
...THE PSYCHIC BACKLASH LEAVING TAROT DAZED-- AND TERRIFIED.
SHE'S COMING FOR ME!
THE LOOK ON HER FACE-- SHE'S CRAZY-- SHE MEANS TO KILL ME!
MY CARDS WILL PROTECT ME--THEY ALWAYS HAVE BEFORE, THEY *MUST!*
WHAT'S SHE CONJURING?
IS SHE A SORCERESS, TOO?


THE CARD USED -- THE ENTITY SUMMONED -- IS THE COMPLEAT WARRIOR...
...THE KNIGHT OF SWORDS.
ILLYANA HAS NEVER FOUGHT A MOUNTED FOE BEFORE.
SHE LEARNS TOO LATE...
...THAT THE HORSE CAN BE AS DEADLY AS ITS RIDER.
ILLYANA-- YOU'RE BLEEDING!
STOP!
COME TO ME, CHILDREN, PLAYTIME'S OVER.
I'VE PUT AN IMAGE IN DANIELLE'S MIND-- BUT THE RASPUTIN GIRL'S IS CLOSED TO ME!
ILLYANA, THAT'S MY GRANDFATHER! BUT HOW-- I SAW HIM DIE!
DON'T LOOK, DANI, DON'T LISTEN! IT'S A TRICK, THE WHITE QUEEN'S DECEIVING YOU!
WE'RE BOTH HURT, WE'RE NO MATCH FOR HER--
-- WE'VE GOT TO RUN!
THEY JUMPED INTO THAT LIGHT-- AND DISAPPEARED! MAM-SELLE FROST, WHAT HAPPENED, WHERE DID THEY GO?
HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS, CHERIE.
SO-- ILLYANA RASPUTIN IS A TELEPORTER. HER RANGE MUST BE CONSIDERABLE. I CAN'T SENSE DANI'S THOUGHTS ANYWHERE NEAR THE SCHOOL.
I'LL NOTIFY SHAW OF THEIR ESCAPE. BY MORNING, EVERY HELLFIRE OPERATIVE IN THE WORLD WILL BE LOOKING FOR THEM.
ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM, BRATS. IT WON'T LAST LONG.

NEXT ISSUE THE FINAL SHOWDOWN AND The GETAWAY!

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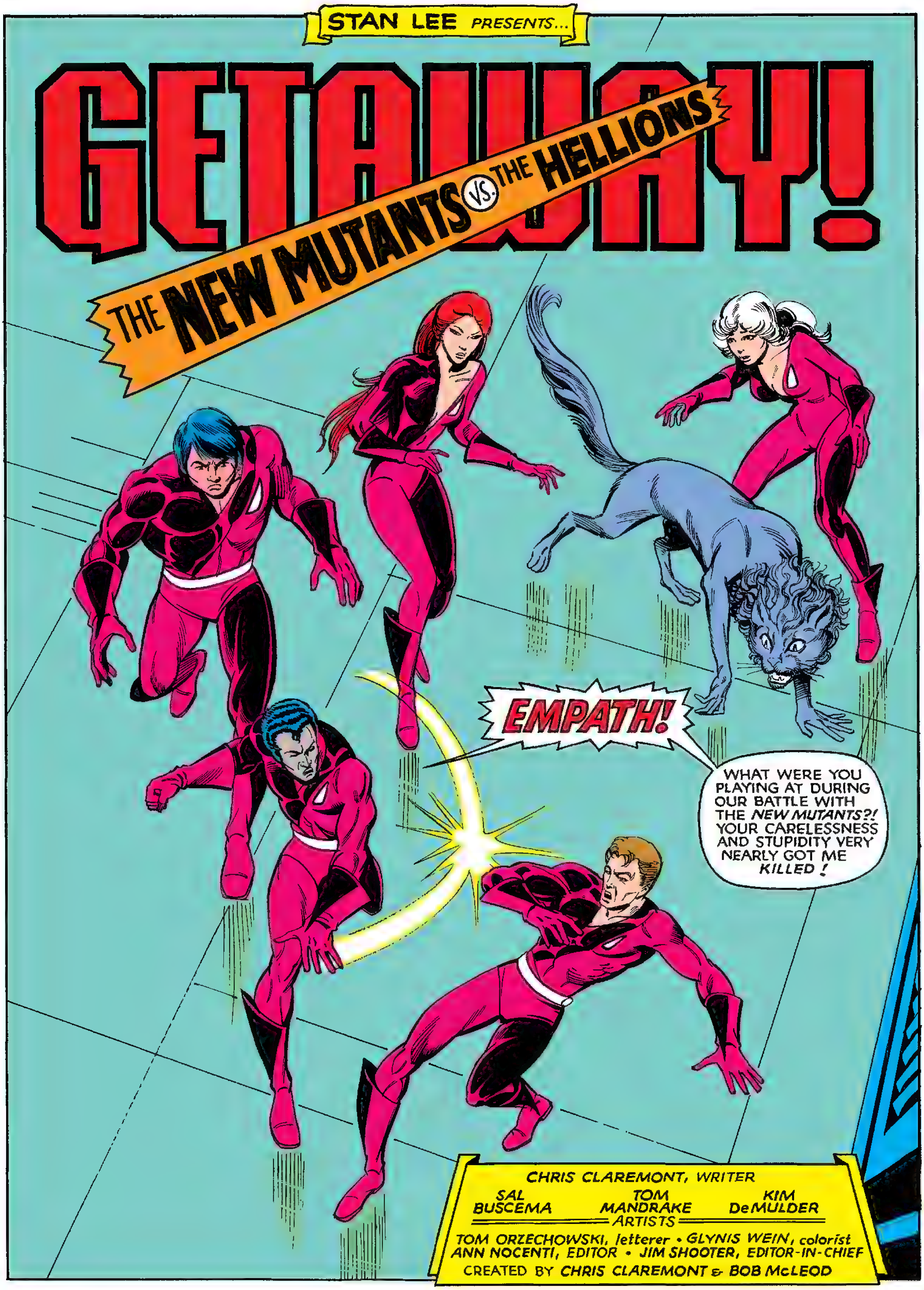
STAN LEE PRESENTS...

# GETAWAY!

## THE NEW MUTANTS VS. THE HELLIONS


EMPATH!
WHAT WERE YOU PLAYING AT DURING OUR BATTLE WITH THE *NEW MUTANTS?!* YOUR CARELESSNESS AND STUPIDITY VERY NEARLY GOT ME *KILLED!*

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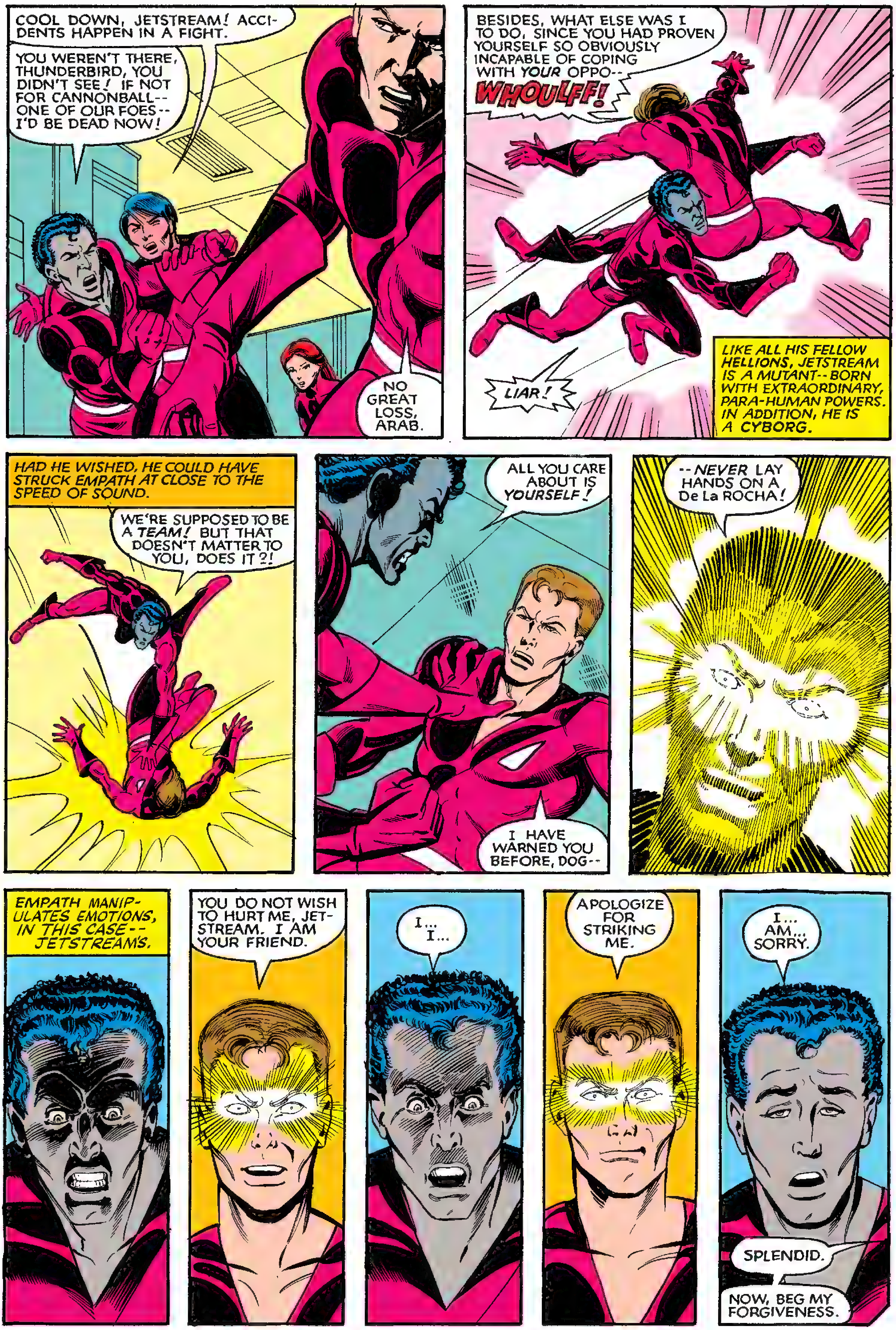
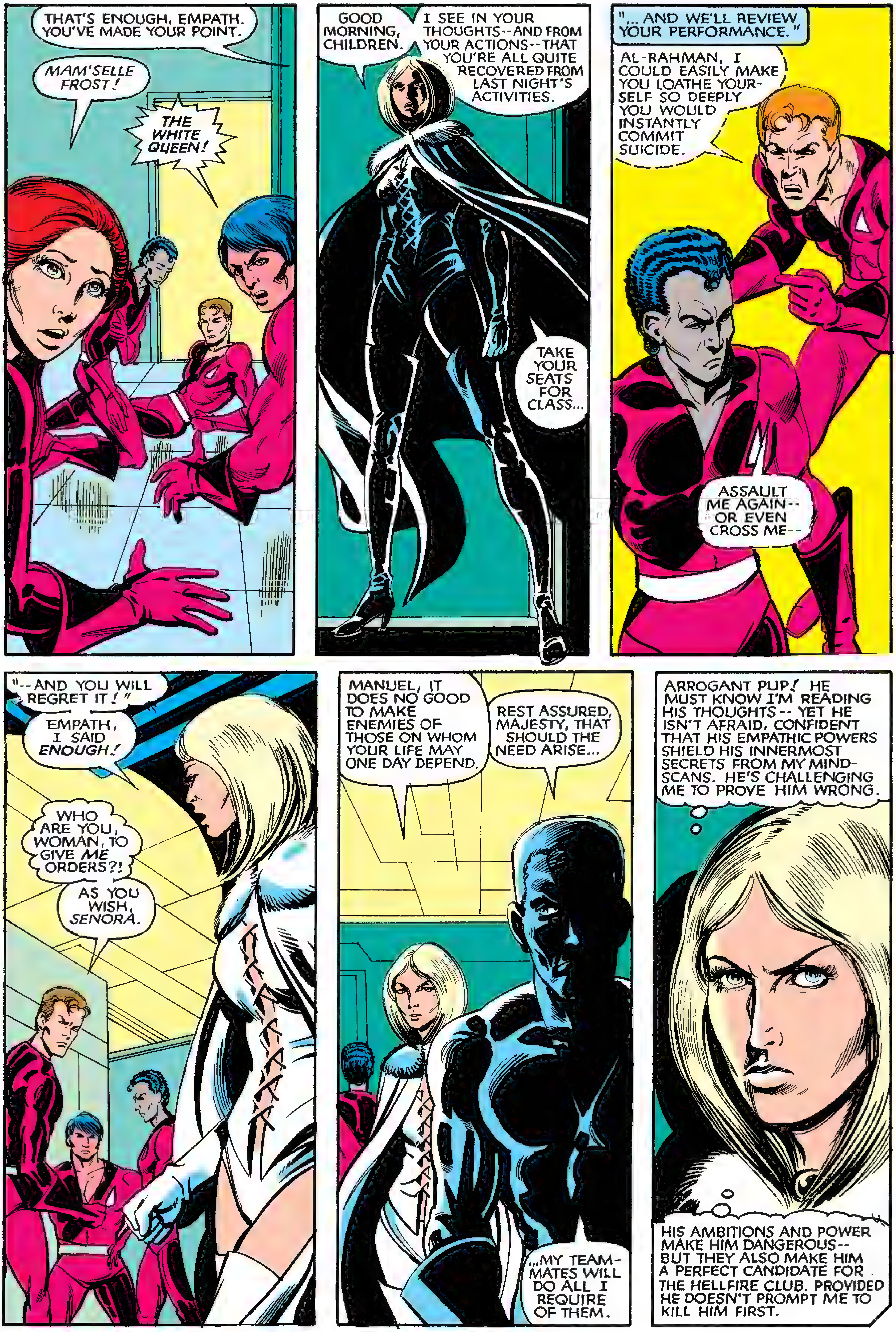
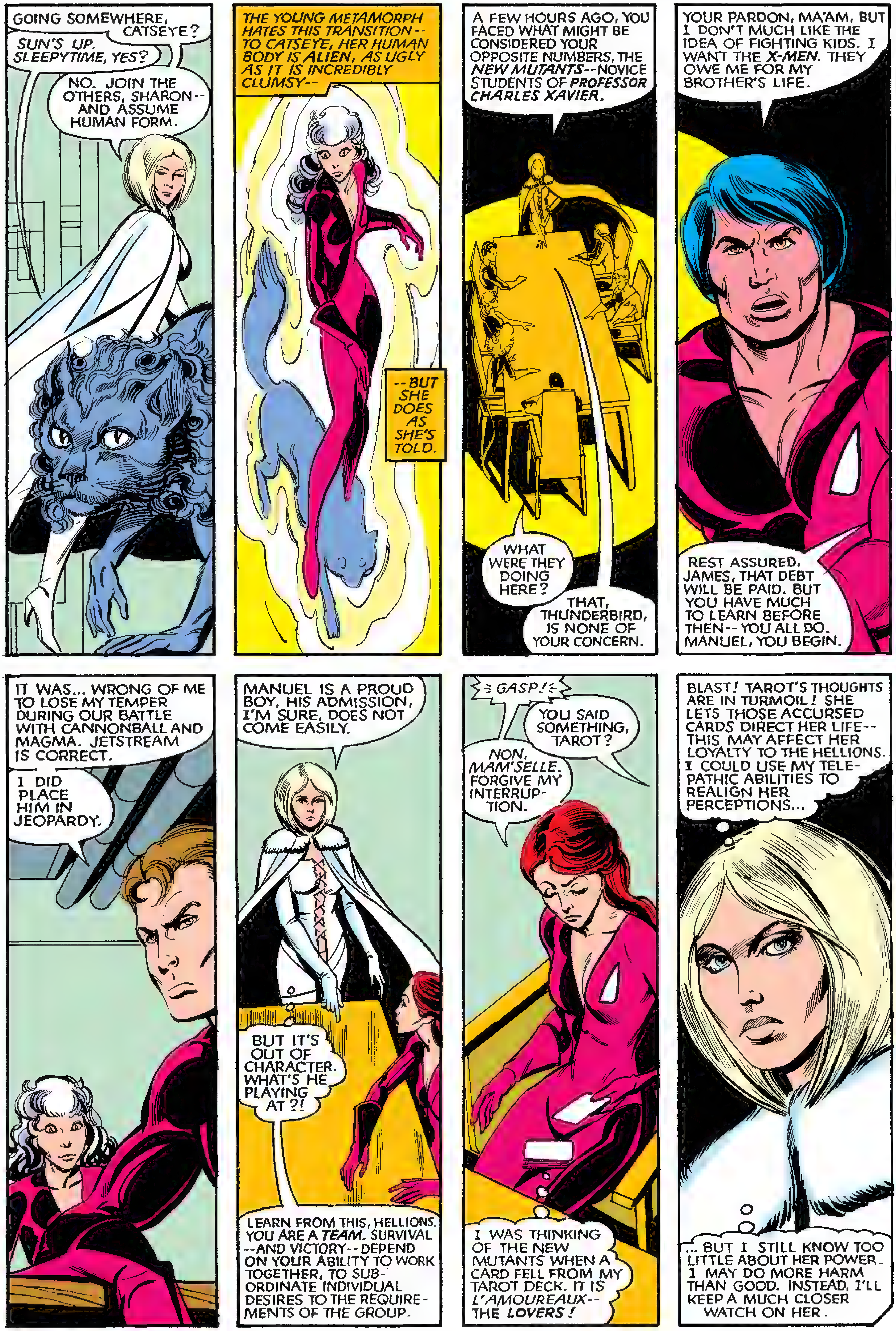
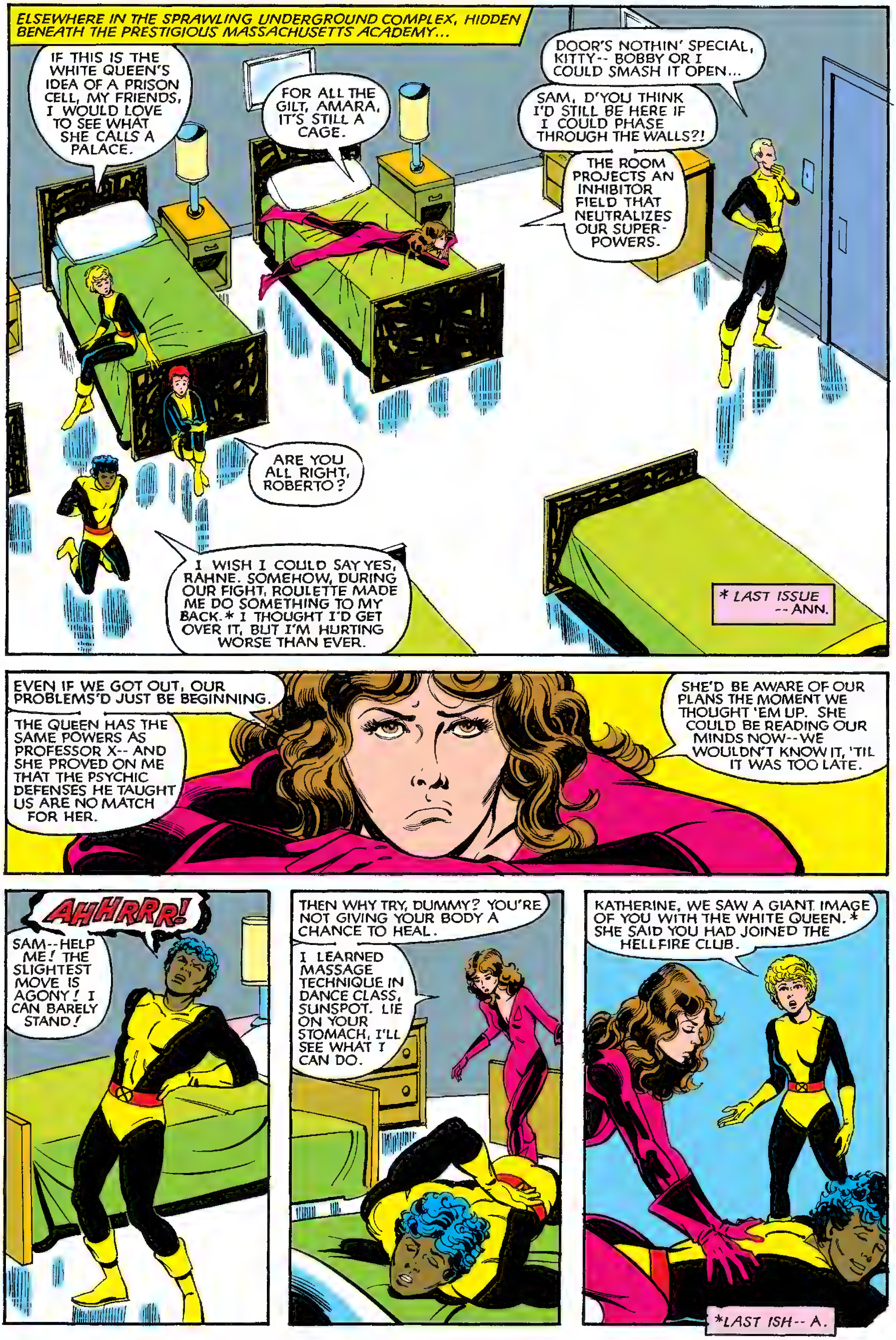
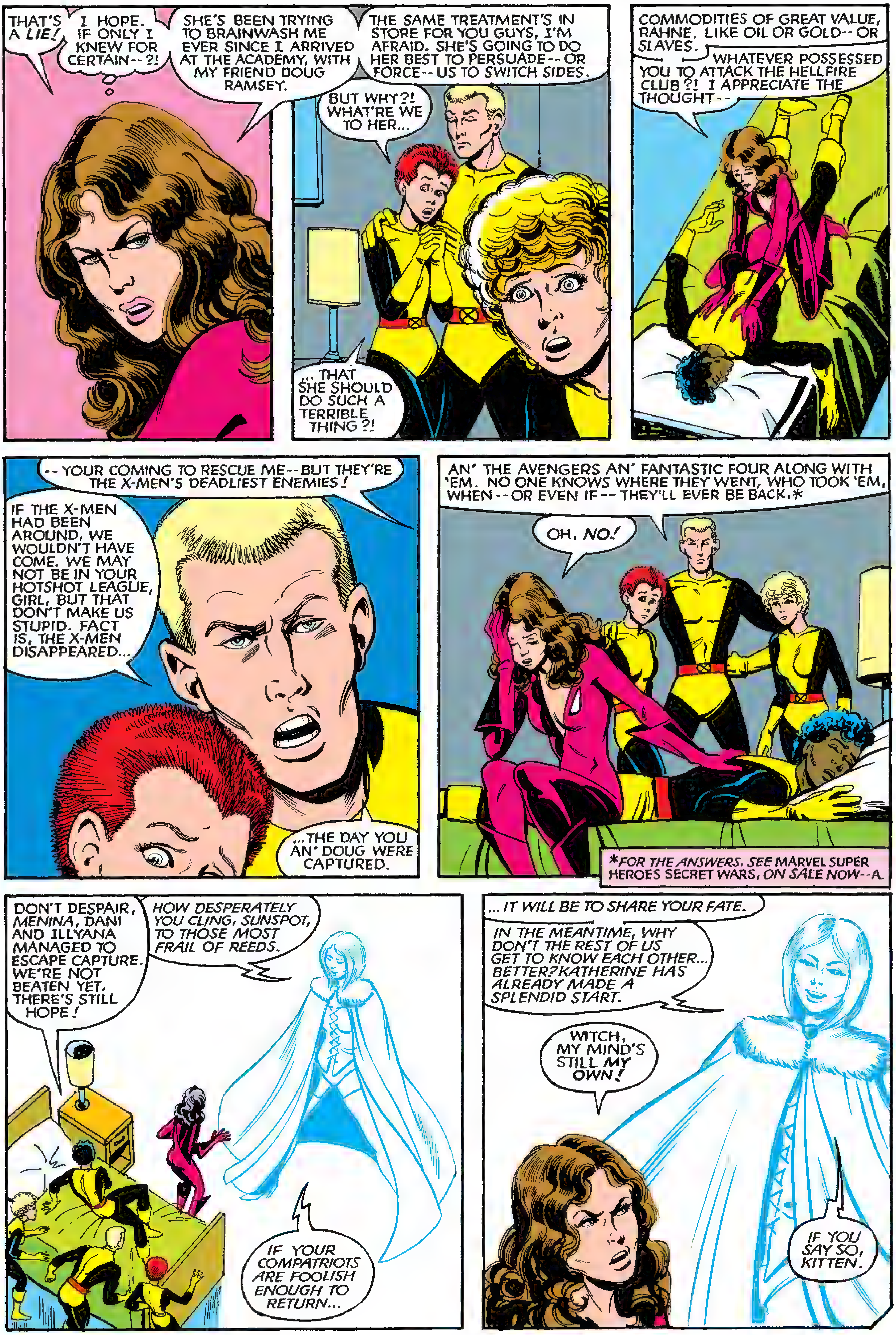
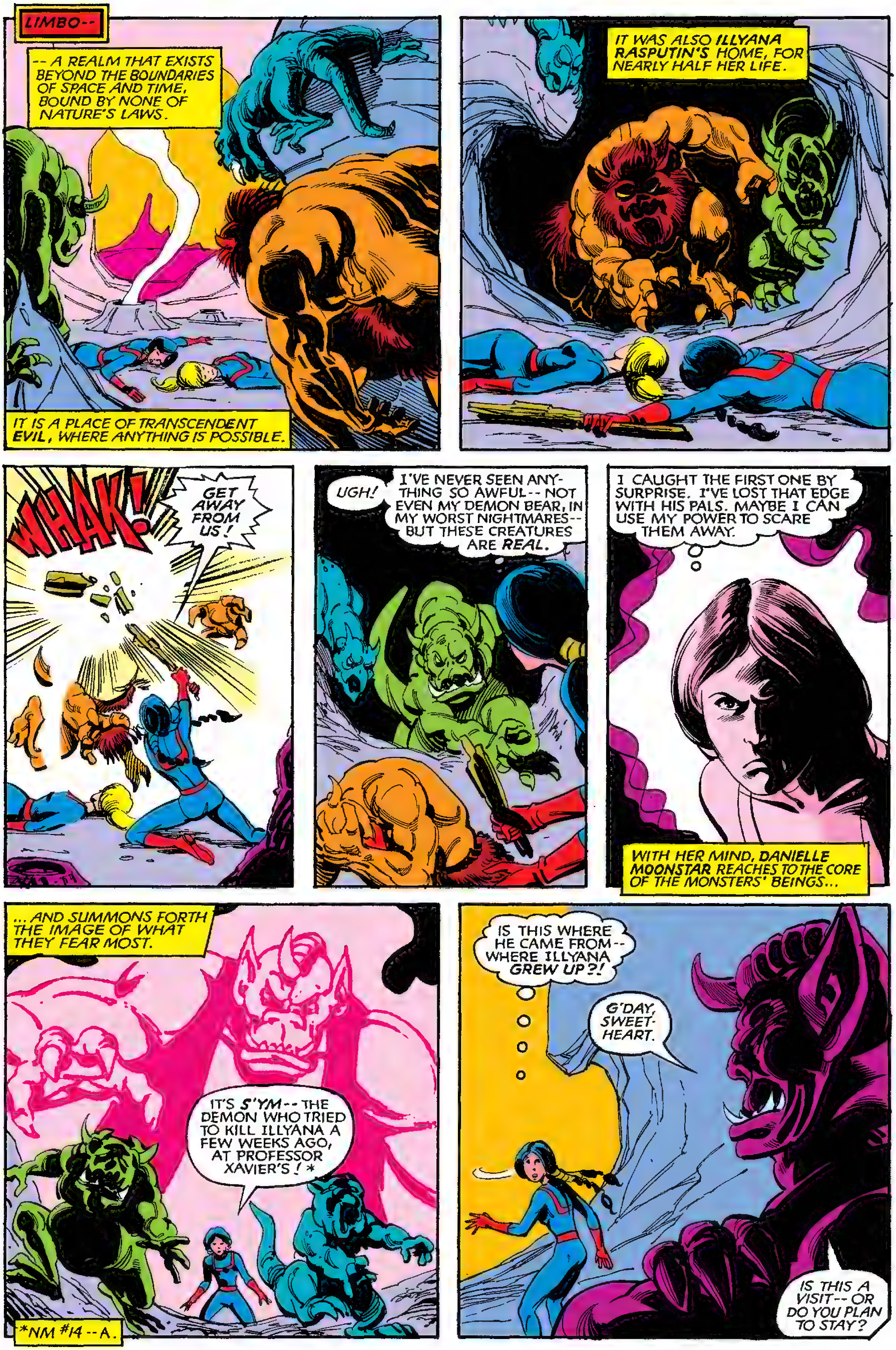

COOL DOWN, JETSTREAM! ACCIDENTS HAPPEN IN A FIGHT.
YOU WEREN'T THERE, THUNDERBIRD, YOU DIDN'T SEE! IF NOT FOR CANNONBALL--ONE OF OUR FOES--I'D BE DEAD NOW!
NO GREAT LOSS, ARAB.
BESIDES, WHAT ELSE WAS I TO DO, SINCE YOU HAD PROVEN YOURSELF SO OBVIOUSLY INCAPABLE OF COPING WITH YOUR OPPO--
WHOULFF!
LIAR!
LIKE ALL HIS FELLOW HELLIONS, JETSTREAM IS A MUTANT--BORN WITH EXTRAORDINARY, PARA-HUMAN POWERS. IN ADDITION, HE IS A CYBORG.
HAD HE WISHED, HE COULD HAVE STRUCK EMPATH AT CLOSE TO THE SPEED OF SOUND.
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A TEAM! BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU, DOES IT?!
ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS YOURSELF!
I HAVE WARNED YOU BEFORE, DOG--
--NEVER LAY HANDS ON A De La ROCHA!
EMPATH MANIPULATES EMOTIONS, IN THIS CASE--JETSTREAM'S.
YOU DO NOT WISH TO HURT ME, JETSTREAM. I AM YOUR FRIEND.
I... I...
APOLOGIZE FOR STRIKING ME.
I... AM... SORRY.
SPLENDID.
NOW, BEG MY FORGIVENESS.

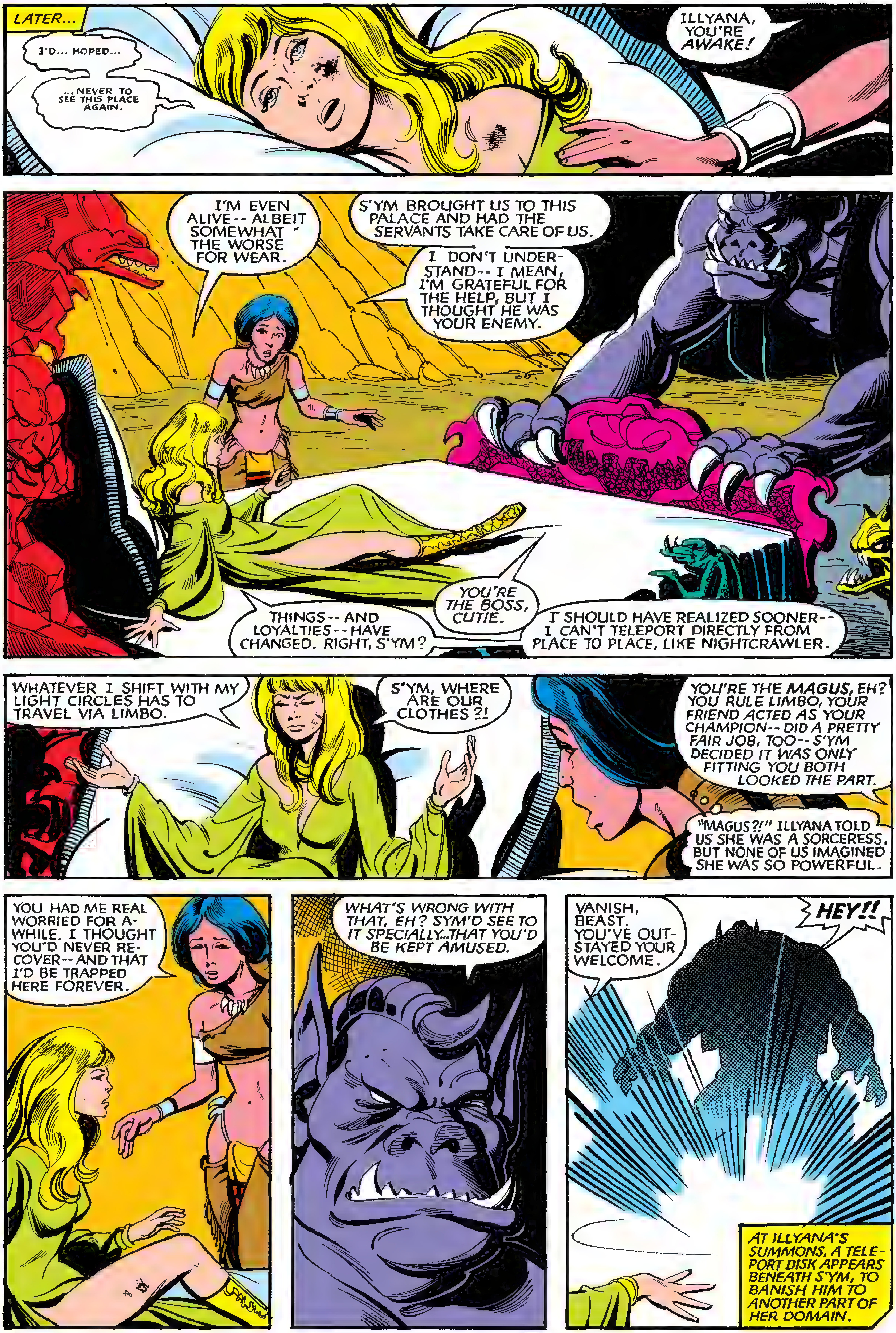

THAT'S ENOUGH, EMPATH. YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT.
MAM'SELLE FROST!
THE WHITE QUEEN!
GOOD MORNING, CHILDREN.
I SEE IN YOUR THOUGHTS--AND FROM YOUR ACTIONS--THAT YOU'RE ALL QUITE RECOVERED FROM LAST NIGHT'S ACTIVITIES.
TAKE YOUR SEATS FOR CLASS...
"... AND WE'LL REVIEW YOUR PERFORMANCE."
AL-RAHMAN, I COULD EASILY MAKE YOU LOATHE YOURSELF SO DEEPLY YOU WOULD INSTANTLY COMMIT SUICIDE.
ASSAULT ME AGAIN--OR EVEN CROSS ME--
"--AND YOU WILL REGRET IT!"
EMPATH, I SAID ENOUGH!
WHO ARE YOU, WOMAN, TO GIVE ME ORDERS?!
AS YOU WISH, SENORA.
MANUEL, IT DOES NO GOOD TO MAKE ENEMIES OF THOSE ON WHOM YOUR LIFE MAY ONE DAY DEPEND.
REST ASSURED, MAJESTY, THAT SHOULD THE NEED ARISE...
...MY TEAMMATES WILL DO ALL I REQUIRE OF THEM.
ARROGANT PUP! HE MUST KNOW I'M READING HIS THOUGHTS -- YET HE ISN'T AFRAID, CONFIDENT THAT HIS EMPATHIC POWERS SHIELD HIS INNERMOST SECRETS FROM MY MIND-SCANS. HE'S CHALLENGING ME TO PROVE HIM WRONG.
HIS AMBITIONS AND POWER MAKE HIM DANGEROUS--BUT THEY ALSO MAKE HIM A PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR THE HELLFIRE CLUB. PROVIDED HE DOESN'T PROMPT ME TO KILL HIM FIRST.

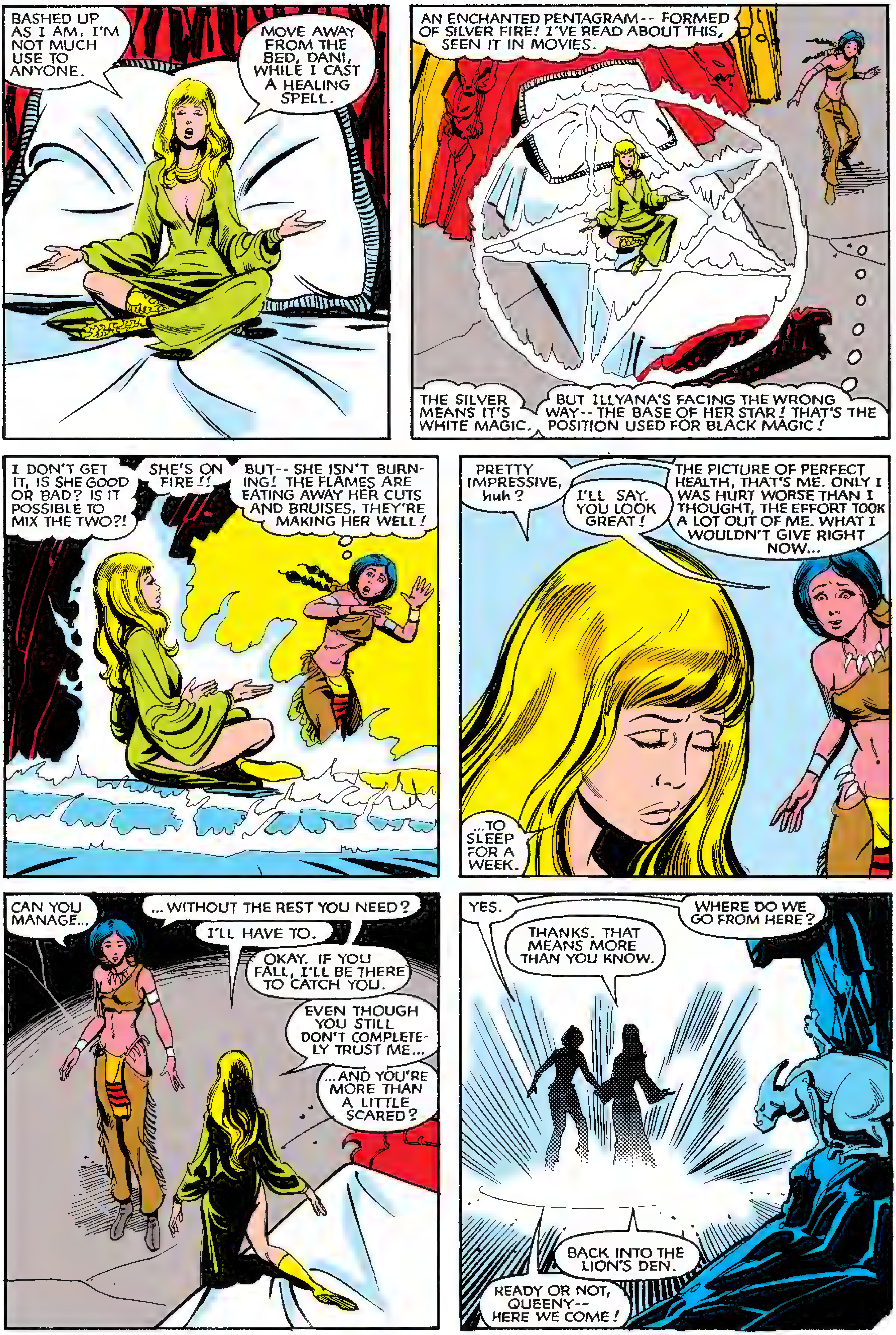

GOING SOMEWHERE, CATSEYE?
SUN'S UP. SLEEPYTIME, YES?
NO. JOIN THE OTHERS, SHARON--AND ASSUME HUMAN FORM.
THE YOUNG METAMORPH HATES THIS TRANSITION--TO CATSEYE, HER HUMAN BODY IS ALIEN, AS UGLY AS IT IS INCREDIBLY CLUMSY--
--BUT SHE DOES AS SHE'S TOLD.
A FEW HOURS AGO, YOU FACED WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED YOUR OPPOSITE NUMBERS, THE NEW MUTANTS--NOVICE STUDENTS OF PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER.
WHAT WERE THEY DOING HERE?
THAT, THUNDERBIRD, IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN.
YOUR PARDON, MA'AM, BUT I DON'T MUCH LIKE THE IDEA OF FIGHTING KIDS. I WANT THE X-MEN. THEY OWE ME FOR MY BROTHER'S LIFE.
REST ASSURED, JAMES, THAT DEBT WILL BE PAID. BUT YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN BEFORE THEN--YOU ALL DO. MANUEL, YOU BEGIN.
IT WAS... WRONG OF ME TO LOSE MY TEMPER DURING OUR BATTLE WITH CANNONBALL AND MAGMA. JETSTREAM IS CORRECT.
I DID PLACE HIM IN JEOPARDY.
MANUEL IS A PROUD BOY. HIS ADMISSION, I'M SURE, DOES NOT COME EASILY.
BUT IT'S OUT OF CHARACTER. WHAT'S HE PLAYING AT?!
LEARN FROM THIS, HELLIONS. YOU ARE A TEAM. SURVIVAL --AND VICTORY--DEPEND ON YOUR ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER, TO SUBORDINATE INDIVIDUAL DESIRES TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GROUP.
GASP!
YOU SAID SOMETHING, TAROT?
NON, MAM'SELLE. FORGIVE MY INTERRUPTION.
I WAS THINKING OF THE NEW MUTANTS WHEN A CARD FELL FROM MY TAROT DECK. IT IS L'AMOUREAUX--THE LOVERS!
BLAST! TAROT'S THOUGHTS ARE IN TURMOIL! SHE LETS THOSE ACCURSED CARDS DIRECT HER LIFE--THIS MAY AFFECT HER LOYALTY TO THE HELLIONS. I COULD USE MY TELEPATHIC ABILITIES TO REALIGN HER PERCEPTIONS...
...BUT I STILL KNOW TOO LITTLE ABOUT HER POWER. I MAY DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. INSTEAD, I'LL KEEP A MUCH CLOSER WATCH ON HER.

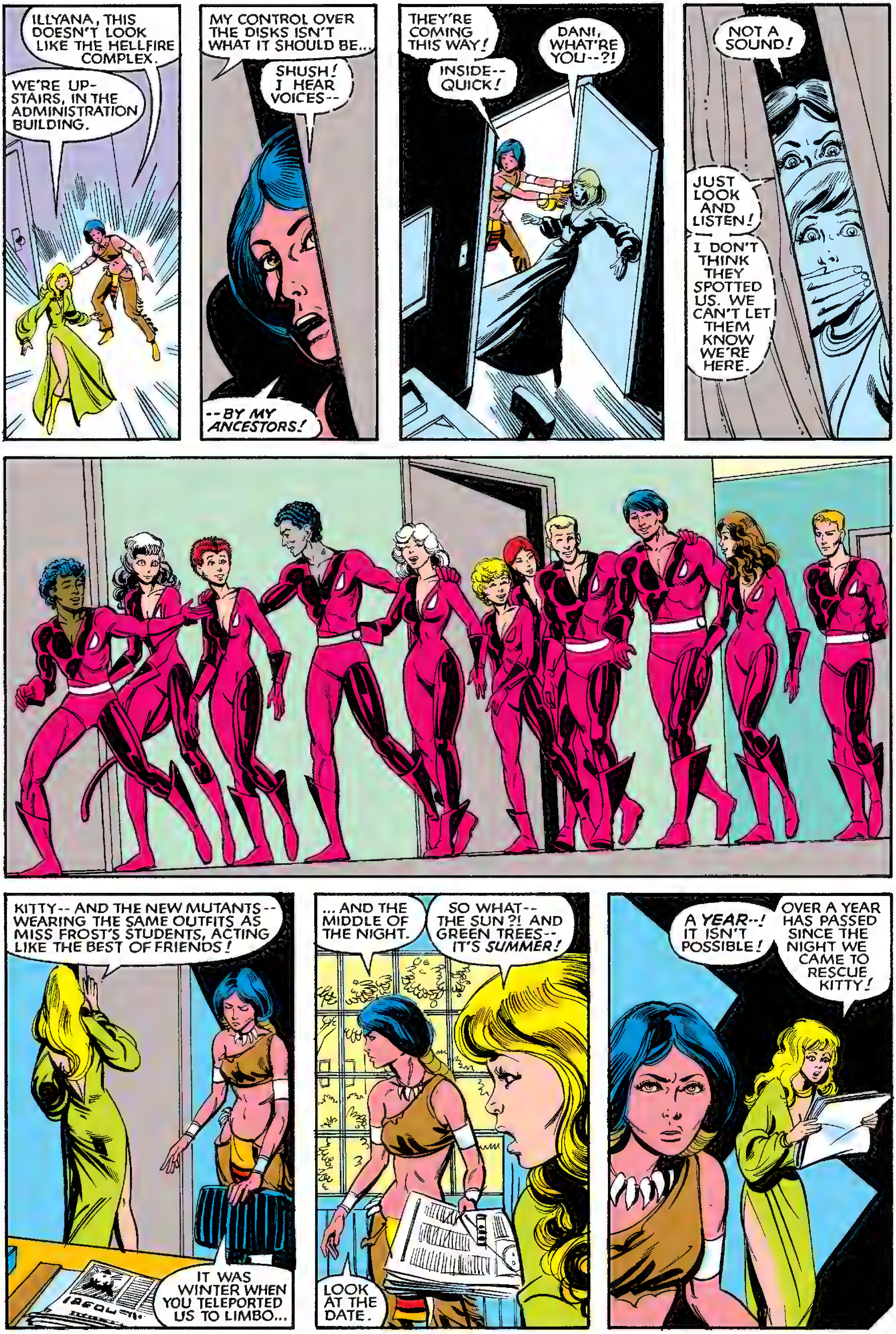

ELSEWHERE IN THE SPRAWLING UNDERGROUND COMPLEX, HIDDEN BENEATH THE PRESTIGIOUS MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY...
IF THIS IS THE WHITE QUEEN'S IDEA OF A PRISON CELL, MY FRIENDS, I WOULD LOVE TO SEE WHAT SHE CALLS A PALACE.
FOR ALL THE GILT, AMARA, IT'S STILL A CAGE.
DOOR'S NOTHIN' SPECIAL, KITTY-- BOBBY OR I COULD SMASH IT OPEN...
SAM, D'YOU THINK I'D STILL BE HERE IF I COULD PHASE THROUGH THE WALLS?!
THE ROOM PROJECTS AN INHIBITOR FIELD THAT NEUTRALIZES OUR SUPER-POWERS.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ROBERTO?
I WISH I COULD SAY YES, RAHNE. SOMEHOW, DURING OUR FIGHT, ROULETTE MADE ME DO SOMETHING TO MY BACK.* I THOUGHT I'D GET OVER IT, BUT I'M HURTING WORSE THAN EVER.
* LAST ISSUE --ANN.
EVEN IF WE GOT OUT, OUR PROBLEMS'D JUST BE BEGINNING.
THE QUEEN HAS THE SAME POWERS AS PROFESSOR X-- AND SHE PROVED ON ME THAT THE PSYCHIC DEFENSES HE TAUGHT US ARE NO MATCH FOR HER.
SHE'D BE AWARE OF OUR PLANS THE MOMENT WE THOUGHT 'EM UP. SHE COULD BE READING OUR MINDS NOW--WE WOULDN'T KNOW IT, 'TIL IT WAS TOO LATE.
AHHRRR!
SAM--HELP ME! THE SLIGHTEST MOVE IS AGONY! I CAN BARELY STAND!
THEN WHY TRY, DUMMY? YOU'RE NOT GIVING YOUR BODY A CHANCE TO HEAL.
I LEARNED MASSAGE TECHNIQUE IN DANCE CLASS, SUNSPOT. LIE ON YOUR STOMACH, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
KATHERINE, WE SAW A GIANT IMAGE OF YOU WITH THE WHITE QUEEN.* SHE SAID YOU HAD JOINED THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
*LAST ISH-- A.

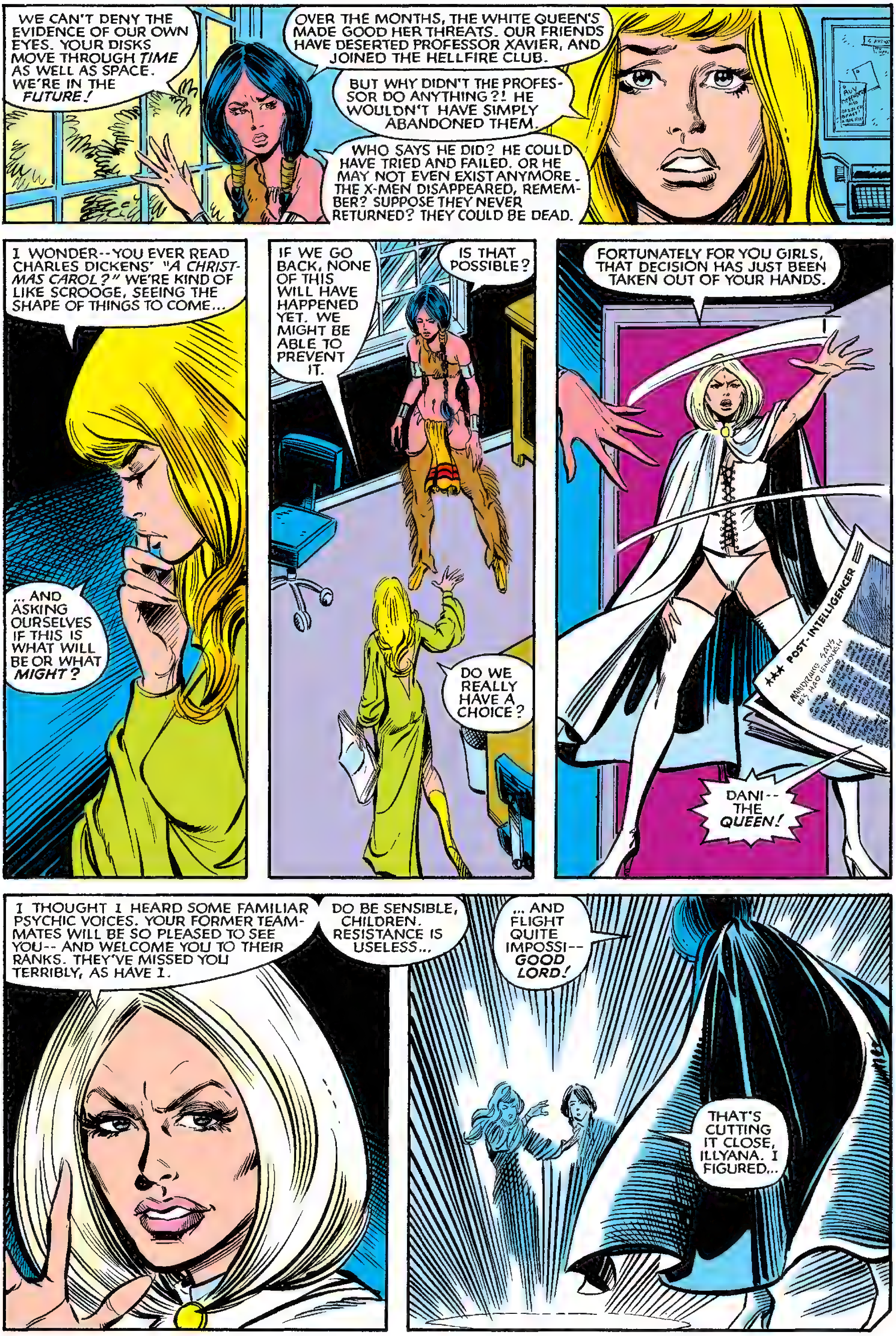

THAT'S A *LIE!*
I HOPE. IF ONLY I KNEW FOR CERTAIN--?!
SHE'S BEEN TRYING TO BRAINWASH ME EVER SINCE I ARRIVED AT THE ACADEMY, WITH MY FRIEND DOUG RAMSEY.
THE SAME TREATMENT'S IN STORE FOR YOU GUYS, I'M AFRAID. SHE'S GOING TO DO HER BEST TO PERSUADE--OR FORCE--US TO SWITCH SIDES.
BUT WHY?! WHAT'RE WE TO HER...
...THAT SHE SHOULD DO SUCH A TERRIBLE THING?!
COMMODITIES OF GREAT VALUE, RAHNE. LIKE OIL OR GOLD--OR SLAVES.
WHATEVER POSSESSED YOU TO ATTACK THE HELLFIRE CLUB?! I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT--
--YOUR COMING TO RESCUE ME--BUT THEY'RE THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST ENEMIES!
IF THE X-MEN HAD BEEN AROUND, WE WOULDN'T HAVE COME. WE MAY NOT BE IN YOUR HOTSHOT LEAGUE, GIRL, BUT THAT DON'T MAKE US STUPID. FACT IS, THE X-MEN DISAPPEARED...
...THE DAY YOU AN' DOUG WERE CAPTURED.
AN' THE AVENGERS AN' FANTASTIC FOUR ALONG WITH 'EM. NO ONE KNOWS WHERE THEY WENT, WHO TOOK 'EM, WHEN--OR EVEN IF--THEY'LL EVER BE BACK.*
OH, *NO!*
**FOR THE ANSWERS, SEE* MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS, *ON SALE NOW*--A.
DON'T DESPAIR, MENINA, DANI AND ILLYANA MANAGED TO ESCAPE CAPTURE. WE'RE NOT BEATEN YET. THERE'S STILL HOPE!
*HOW DESPERATELY YOU CLING, SUNSPOT, TO THOSE MOST FRAIL OF REEDS.*
*IF YOUR COMPATRIOTS ARE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO RETURN...*
*...IT WILL BE TO SHARE YOUR FATE.*
*IN THE MEANTIME, WHY DON'T THE REST OF US GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER... BETTER? KATHERINE HAS ALREADY MADE A SPLENDID START.*
WITCH, MY MIND'S STILL *MY OWN!*
*IF YOU SAY SO, KITTEN.*

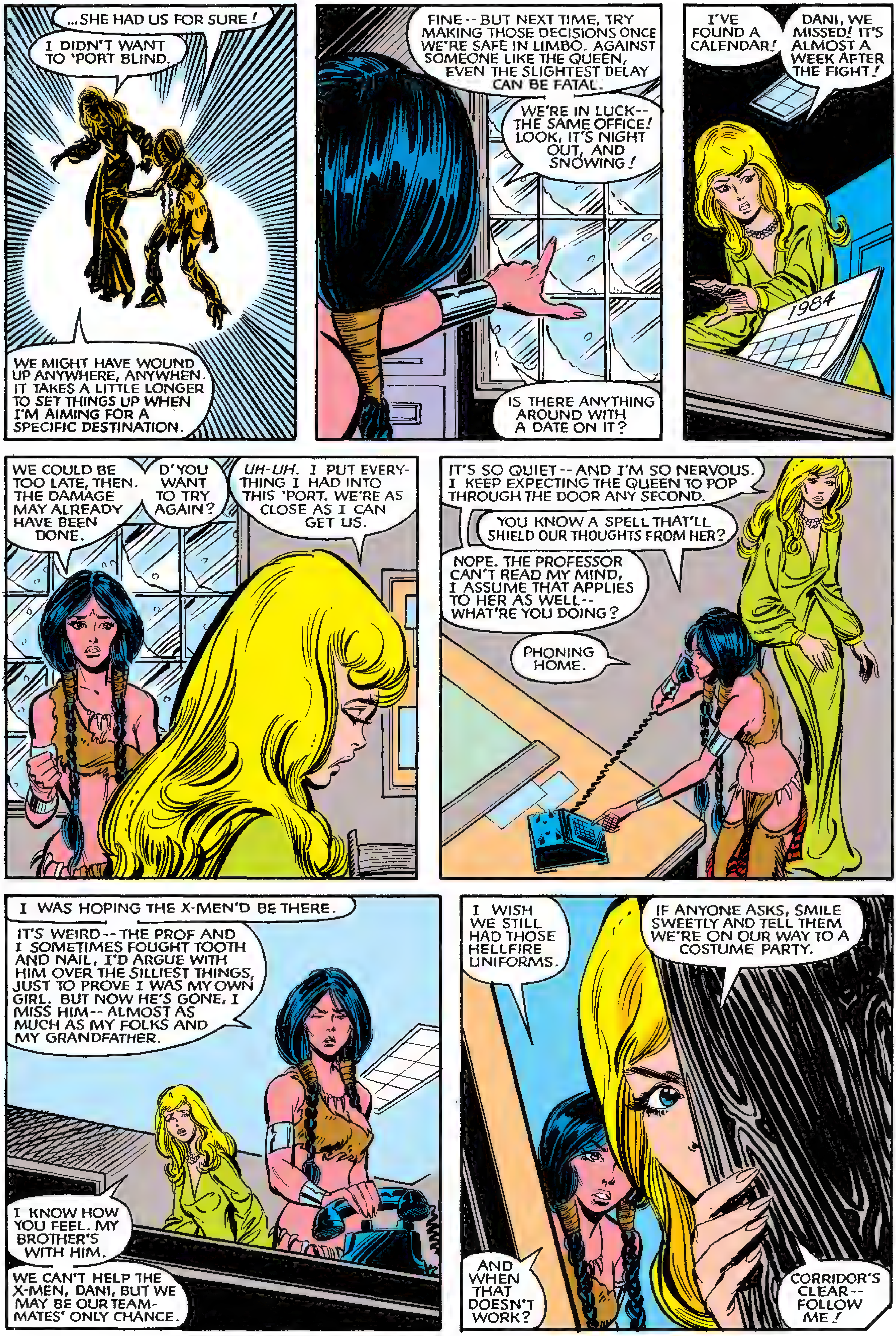

LIMBO--
-- A REALM THAT EXISTS BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF SPACE AND TIME, BOUND BY NONE OF NATURE'S LAWS.
IT IS A PLACE OF TRANSCENDENT EVIL, WHERE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
IT WAS ALSO ILLYANA RASPUTIN'S HOME, FOR NEARLY HALF HER LIFE.
WHAK!
GET AWAY FROM US!
UGH!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO AWFUL -- NOT EVEN MY DEMON BEAR, IN MY WORST NIGHTMARES -- BUT THESE CREATURES ARE REAL.
I CAUGHT THE FIRST ONE BY SURPRISE. I'VE LOST THAT EDGE WITH HIS PALS. MAYBE I CAN USE MY POWER TO SCARE THEM AWAY.
WITH HER MIND, DANIELLE MOONSTAR REACHES TO THE CORE OF THE MONSTERS' BEINGS...
... AND SUMMONS FORTH THE IMAGE OF WHAT THEY FEAR MOST.
IT'S S'YM -- THE DEMON WHO TRIED TO KILL ILLYANA A FEW WEEKS AGO, AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S! *
*NM #14 -- A.
IS THIS WHERE HE CAME FROM -- WHERE ILLYANA GREW UP?!
G'DAY, SWEETHEART.
IS THIS A VISIT -- OR DO YOU PLAN TO STAY?

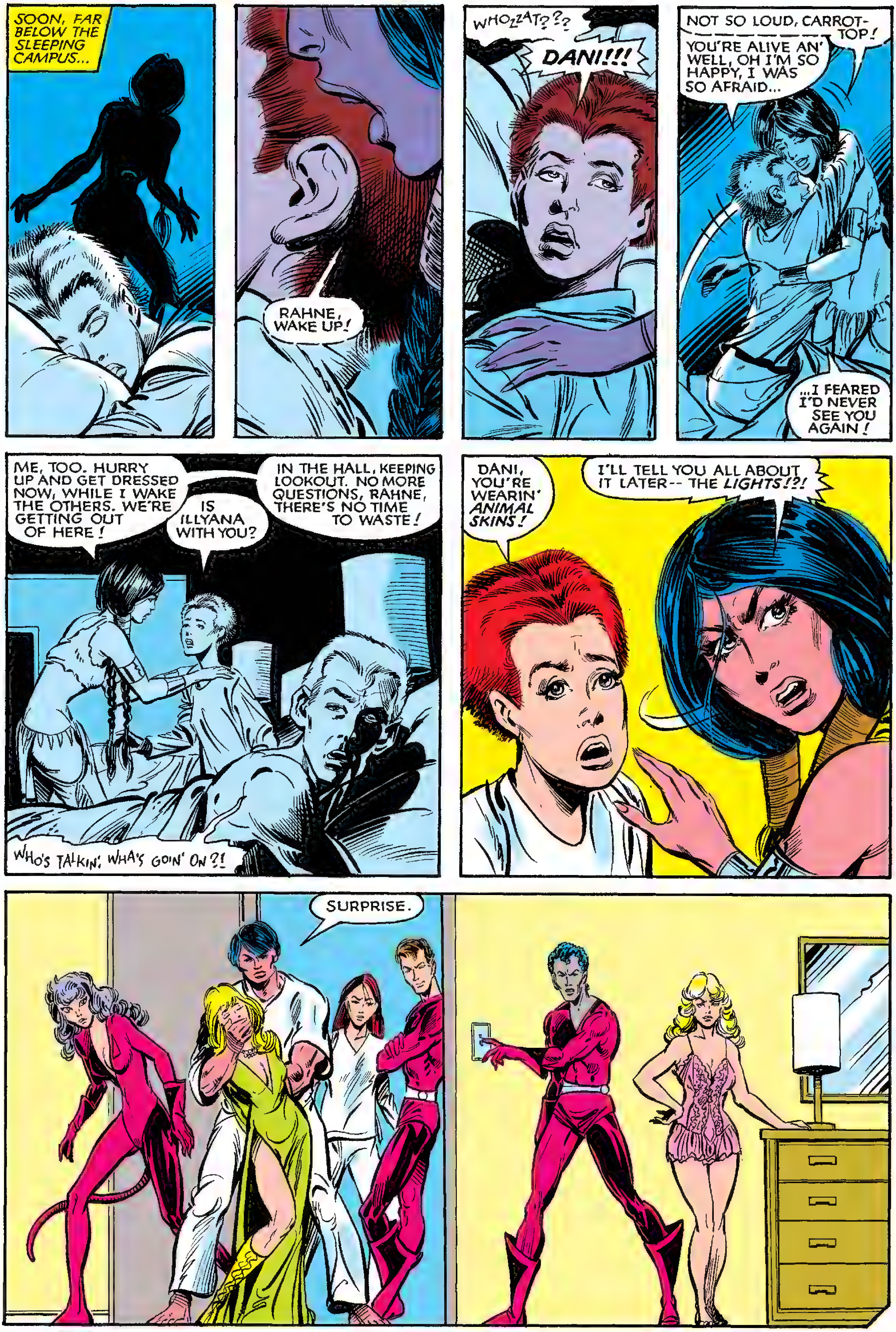

LATER...
I'D... HOPED...
...NEVER TO SEE THIS PLACE AGAIN.
ILLYANA, YOU'RE *AWAKE!*
I'M EVEN ALIVE -- ALBEIT SOMEWHAT THE WORSE FOR WEAR.
S'YM BROUGHT US TO THIS PALACE AND HAD THE SERVANTS TAKE CARE OF US.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND -- I MEAN, I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE HELP, BUT I THOUGHT HE WAS YOUR ENEMY.
THINGS -- AND LOYALTIES -- HAVE CHANGED. RIGHT, S'YM?
*YOU'RE THE BOSS, CUTIE.*
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED SOONER -- I CAN'T TELEPORT DIRECTLY FROM PLACE TO PLACE, LIKE NIGHTCRAWLER.
WHATEVER I SHIFT WITH MY LIGHT CIRCLES HAS TO TRAVEL VIA LIMBO.
S'YM, WHERE ARE OUR CLOTHES ?!
*YOU'RE THE **MAGUS**, EH? YOU RULE LIMBO, YOUR FRIEND ACTED AS YOUR CHAMPION -- DID A PRETTY FAIR JOB, TOO -- S'YM DECIDED IT WAS ONLY FITTING YOU BOTH LOOKED THE PART.*
"MAGUS?!" ILLYANA TOLD US SHE WAS A SORCERESS, BUT NONE OF US IMAGINED SHE WAS SO POWERFUL.
YOU HAD ME REAL WORRIED FOR AWHILE. I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER RECOVER -- AND THAT I'D BE TRAPPED HERE FOREVER.
*WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT, EH? SYM'D SEE TO IT SPECIALLY...THAT YOU'D BE KEPT AMUSED.*
VANISH, BEAST. YOU'VE OUTSTAYED YOUR WELCOME.
*HEY!!*
*AT ILLYANA'S SUMMONS, A TELEPORT DISK APPEARS BENEATH S'YM, TO BANISH HIM TO ANOTHER PART OF HER DOMAIN.*

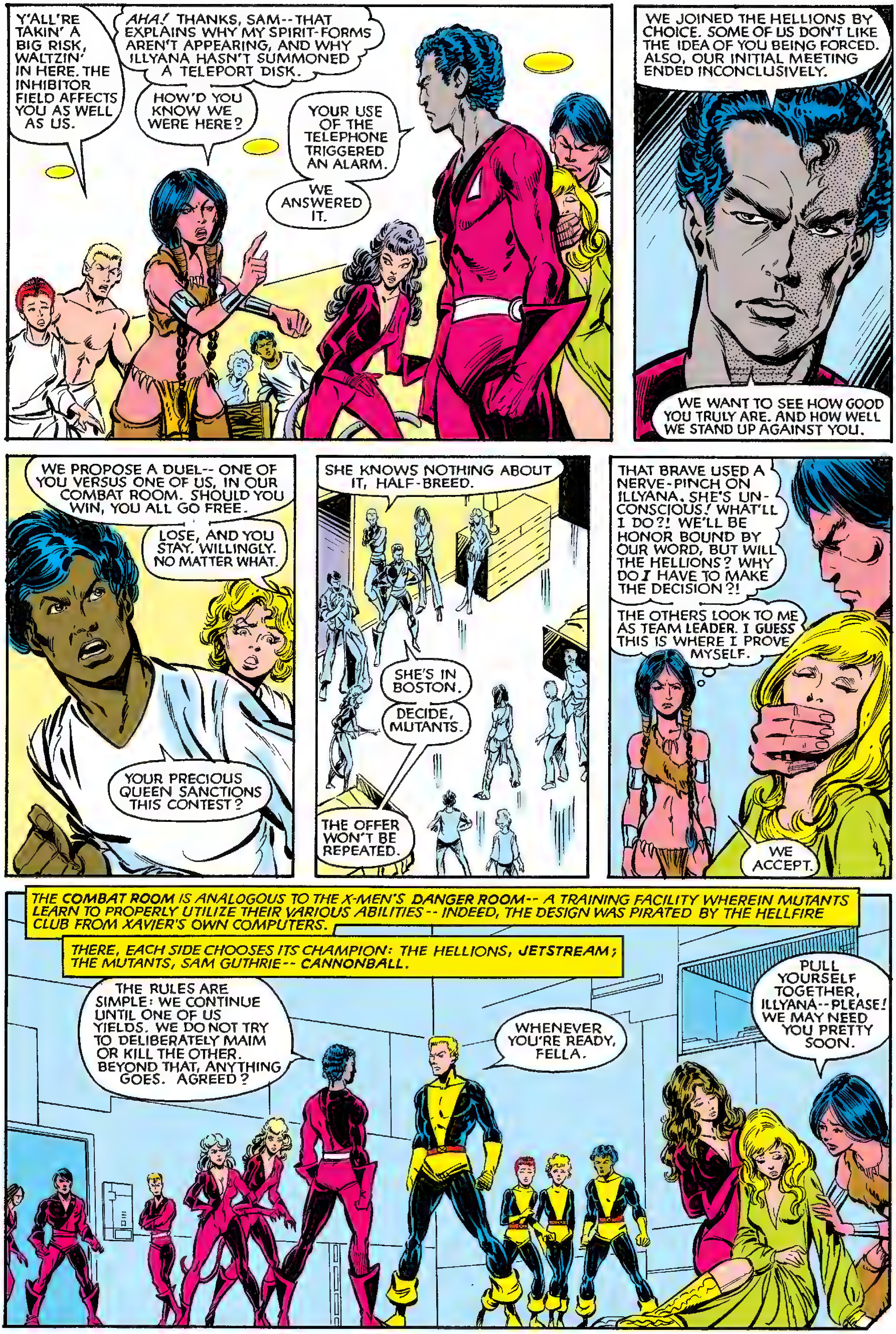

BASHED UP AS I AM, I'M NOT MUCH USE TO ANYONE.
MOVE AWAY FROM THE BED, DANI, WHILE I CAST A HEALING SPELL.
AN ENCHANTED PENTAGRAM-- FORMED OF SILVER FIRE! I'VE READ ABOUT THIS, SEEN IT IN MOVIES.
THE SILVER MEANS IT'S WHITE MAGIC.
BUT ILLYANA'S FACING THE WRONG WAY-- THE BASE OF HER STAR! THAT'S THE POSITION USED FOR BLACK MAGIC!
I DON'T GET IT, IS SHE GOOD OR BAD? IS IT POSSIBLE TO MIX THE TWO?!
SHE'S ON FIRE!!
BUT-- SHE ISN'T BURNING! THE FLAMES ARE EATING AWAY HER CUTS AND BRUISES, THEY'RE MAKING HER WELL!
PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, huh?
I'LL SAY. YOU LOOK GREAT!
THE PICTURE OF PERFECT HEALTH, THAT'S ME. ONLY I WAS HURT WORSE THAN I THOUGHT, THE EFFORT TOOK A LOT OUT OF ME. WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE RIGHT NOW...
...TO SLEEP FOR A WEEK.
CAN YOU MANAGE...
...WITHOUT THE REST YOU NEED?
I'LL HAVE TO.
OKAY. IF YOU FALL, I'LL BE THERE TO CATCH YOU.
EVEN THOUGH YOU STILL DON'T COMPLETELY TRUST ME...
...AND YOU'RE MORE THAN A LITTLE SCARED?
YES.
THANKS. THAT MEANS MORE THAN YOU KNOW.
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
BACK INTO THE LION'S DEN.
READY OR NOT, QUEENY-- HERE WE COME!

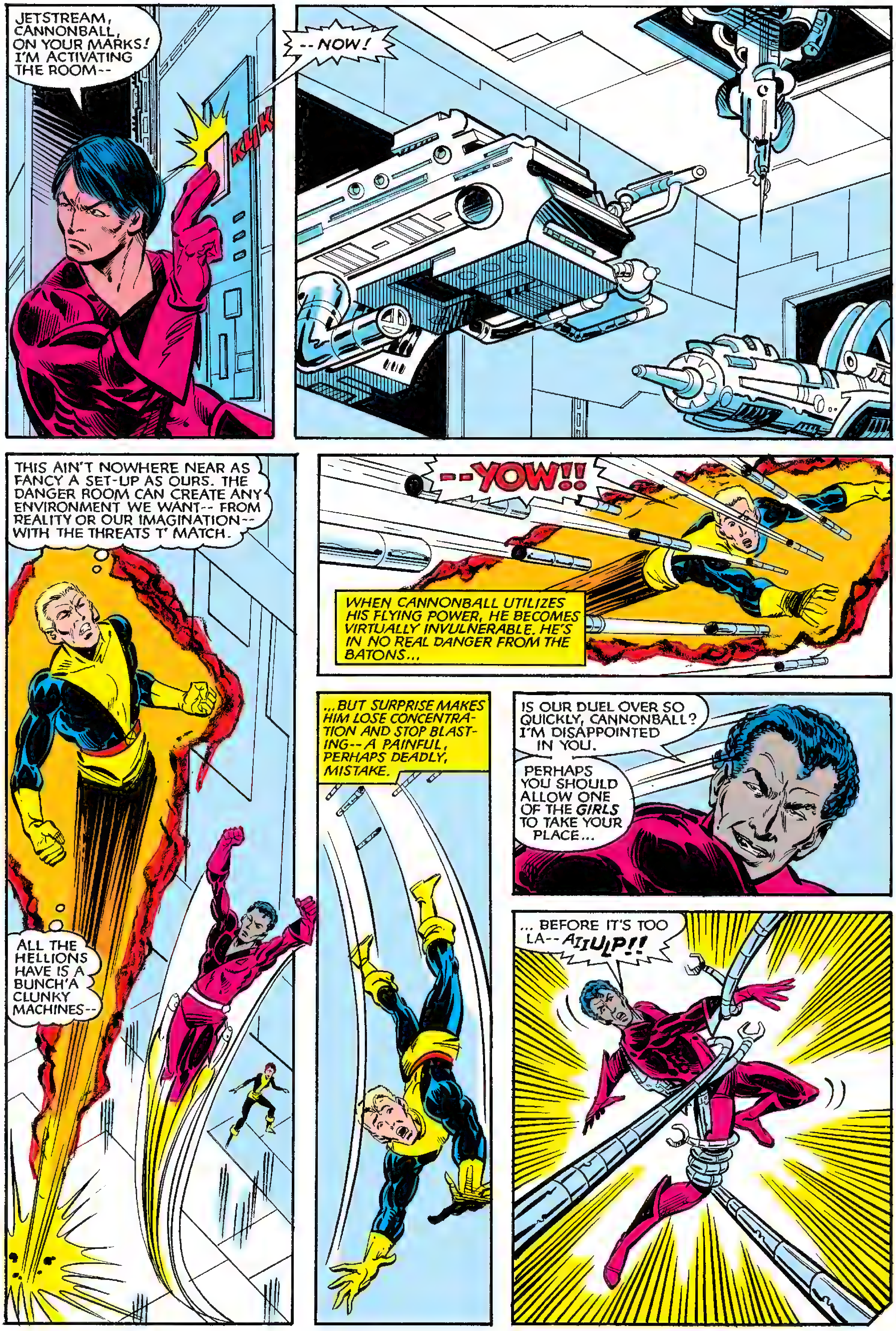

ILLYANA, THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE HELLFIRE COMPLEX.
WE'RE UPSTAIRS, IN THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.
MY CONTROL OVER THE DISKS ISN'T WHAT IT SHOULD BE...
SHUSH! I HEAR VOICES--
--BY MY ANCESTORS!
THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY!
INSIDE--QUICK!
DANI, WHAT'RE YOU--?!
NOT A SOUND!
JUST LOOK AND LISTEN!
I DON'T THINK THEY SPOTTED US. WE CAN'T LET THEM KNOW WE'RE HERE.
KITTY--AND THE NEW MUTANTS--WEARING THE SAME OUTFITS AS MISS FROST'S STUDENTS, ACTING LIKE THE BEST OF FRIENDS!
IT WAS WINTER WHEN YOU TELEPORTED US TO LIMBO...
...AND THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
SO WHAT--THE SUN?! AND GREEN TREES--IT'S *SUMMER!*
LOOK AT THE DATE.
A *YEAR*--! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!
OVER A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE THE NIGHT WE CAME TO RESCUE KITTY!

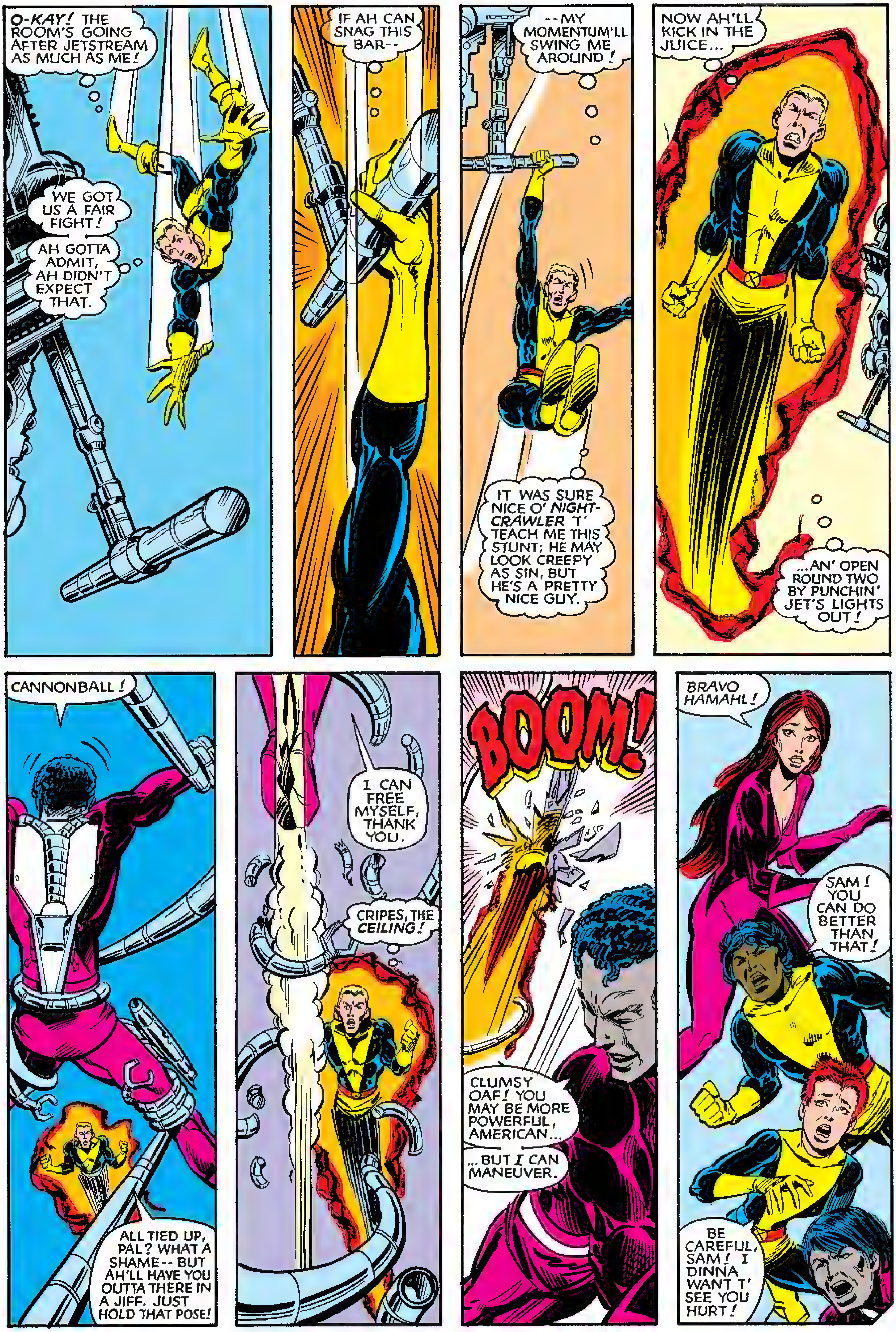

WE CAN'T DENY THE EVIDENCE OF OUR OWN EYES. YOUR DISKS MOVE THROUGH *TIME* AS WELL AS SPACE. WE'RE IN THE *FUTURE!*
OVER THE MONTHS, THE WHITE QUEEN'S MADE GOOD HER THREATS. OUR FRIENDS HAVE DESERTED PROFESSOR XAVIER, AND JOINED THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
BUT WHY DIDN'T THE PROFESSOR DO ANYTHING?! HE WOULDN'T HAVE SIMPLY ABANDONED THEM.
WHO SAYS HE DID? HE COULD HAVE TRIED AND FAILED. OR HE MAY NOT EVEN EXIST ANYMORE. THE X-MEN DISAPPEARED, REMEMBER? SUPPOSE THEY NEVER RETURNED? THEY COULD BE DEAD.
I WONDER--YOU EVER READ CHARLES DICKENS' *"A CHRISTMAS CAROL?"* WE'RE KIND OF LIKE SCROOGE, SEEING THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME...
... AND ASKING OURSELVES IF THIS IS WHAT WILL BE OR WHAT *MIGHT?*
IF WE GO BACK, NONE OF THIS WILL HAVE HAPPENED YET. WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PREVENT IT.
IS THAT POSSIBLE?
DO WE REALLY HAVE A CHOICE?
FORTUNATELY FOR YOU GIRLS, THAT DECISION HAS JUST BEEN TAKEN OUT OF YOUR HANDS.
POST-INTELLIGENCER
DANI--THE *QUEEN!*
I THOUGHT I HEARD SOME FAMILIAR PSYCHIC VOICES. YOUR FORMER TEAMMATES WILL BE SO PLEASED TO SEE YOU-- AND WELCOME YOU TO THEIR RANKS. THEY'VE MISSED YOU TERRIBLY, AS HAVE I.
DO BE SENSIBLE, CHILDREN. RESISTANCE IS USELESS...
... AND FLIGHT QUITE IMPOSSI-- *GOOD LORD!*
THAT'S CUTTING IT CLOSE, ILLYANA. I FIGURED...

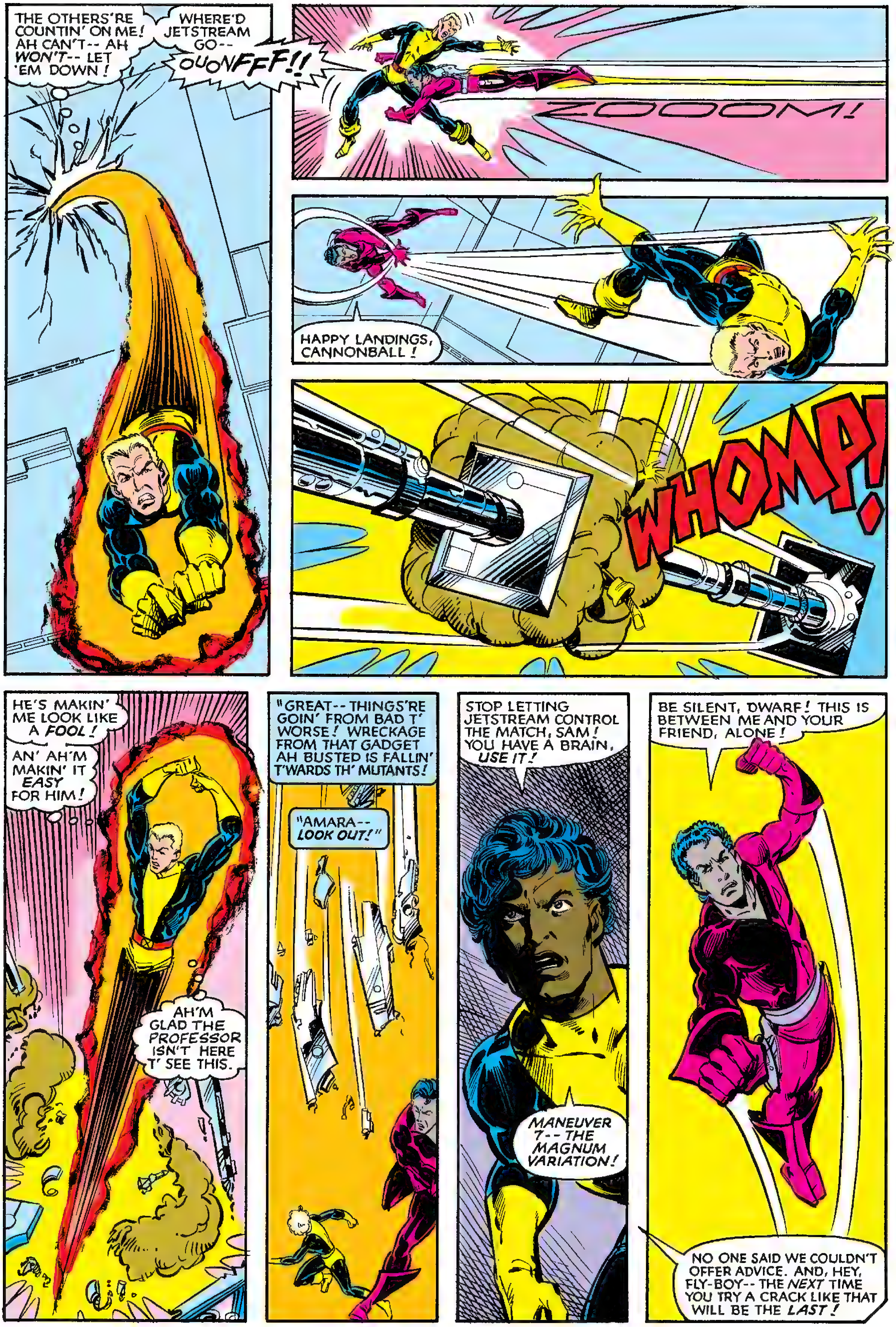

...SHE HAD US FOR SURE!
I DIDN'T WANT TO 'PORT BLIND.
WE MIGHT HAVE WOUND UP ANYWHERE, ANYWHEN. IT TAKES A LITTLE LONGER TO SET THINGS UP WHEN I'M AIMING FOR A SPECIFIC DESTINATION.
FINE--BUT NEXT TIME, TRY MAKING THOSE DECISIONS ONCE WE'RE SAFE IN LIMBO. AGAINST SOMEONE LIKE THE QUEEN, EVEN THE SLIGHTEST DELAY CAN BE FATAL.
WE'RE IN LUCK--THE SAME OFFICE! LOOK, IT'S NIGHT OUT, AND SNOWING!
IS THERE ANYTHING AROUND WITH A DATE ON IT?
I'VE FOUND A CALENDAR!
DANI, WE MISSED! IT'S ALMOST A WEEK AFTER THE FIGHT!
1984
WE COULD BE TOO LATE, THEN. THE DAMAGE MAY ALREADY HAVE BEEN DONE.
D'YOU WANT TO TRY AGAIN?
UH-UH. I PUT EVERYTHING I HAD INTO THIS 'PORT. WE'RE AS CLOSE AS I CAN GET US.
IT'S SO QUIET--AND I'M SO NERVOUS. I KEEP EXPECTING THE QUEEN TO POP THROUGH THE DOOR ANY SECOND.
YOU KNOW A SPELL THAT'LL SHIELD OUR THOUGHTS FROM HER?
NOPE. THE PROFESSOR CAN'T READ MY MIND, I ASSUME THAT APPLIES TO HER AS WELL--WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
PHONING HOME.
I WAS HOPING THE X-MEN'D BE THERE.
IT'S WEIRD--THE PROF AND I SOMETIMES FOUGHT TOOTH AND NAIL, I'D ARGUE WITH HIM OVER THE SILLIEST THINGS, JUST TO PROVE I WAS MY OWN GIRL. BUT NOW HE'S GONE, I MISS HIM--ALMOST AS MUCH AS MY FOLKS AND MY GRANDFATHER.
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL. MY BROTHER'S WITH HIM.
WE CAN'T HELP THE X-MEN, DANI, BUT WE MAY BE OUR TEAMMATES' ONLY CHANCE.
I WISH WE STILL HAD THOSE HELLFIRE UNIFORMS.
IF ANYONE ASKS, SMILE SWEETLY AND TELL THEM WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO A COSTUME PARTY.
AND WHEN THAT DOESN'T WORK?
CORRIDOR'S CLEAR--FOLLOW ME!

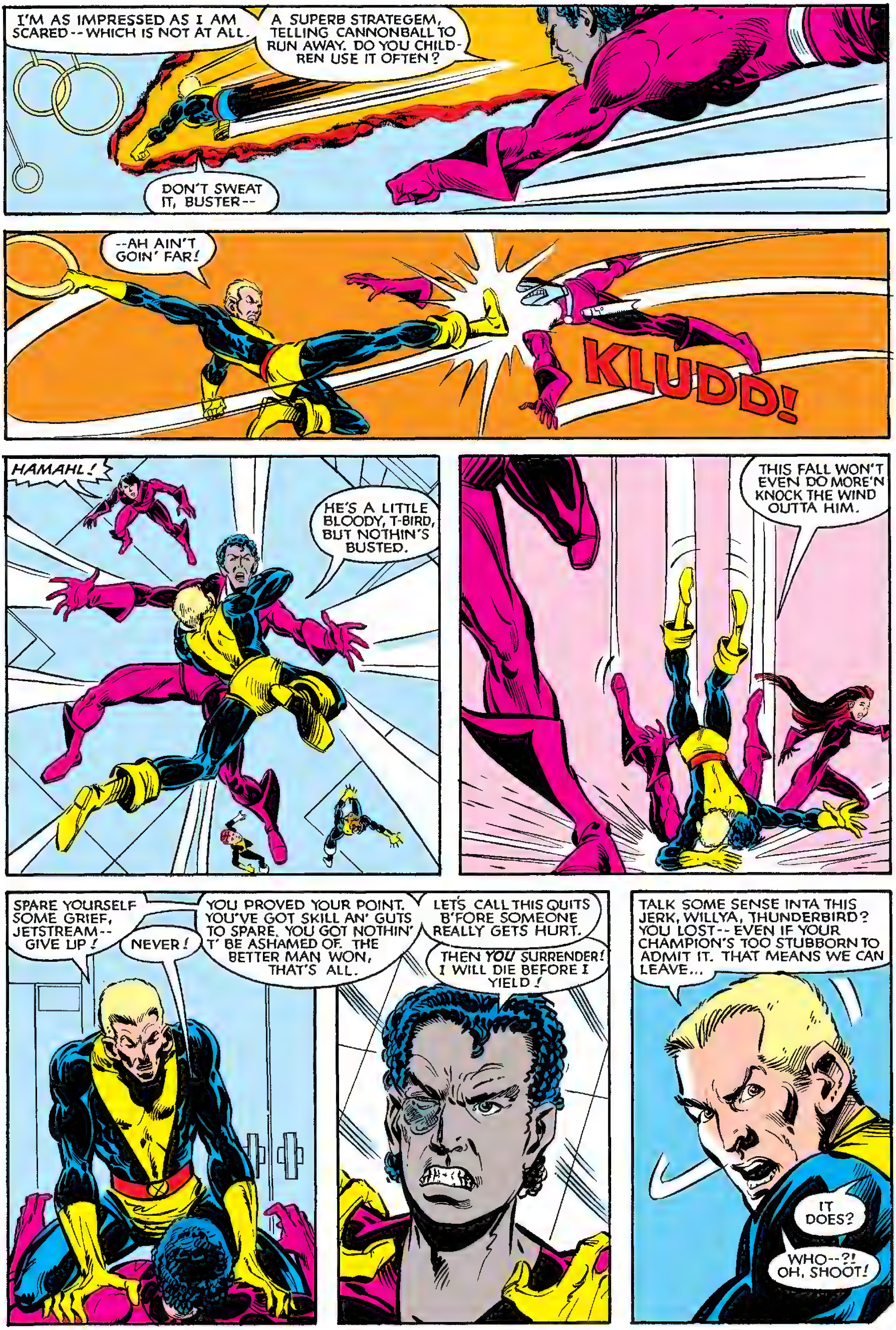

SOON, FAR BELOW THE SLEEPING CAMPUS...
RAHNE, WAKE UP!
WHOZZAT???
DANI!!!
NOT SO LOUD, CARROT-TOP!
YOU'RE ALIVE AN' WELL, OH I'M SO HAPPY, I WAS SO AFRAID...
...I FEARED I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!
ME, TOO. HURRY UP AND GET DRESSED NOW, WHILE I WAKE THE OTHERS. WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE!
IS ILLYANA WITH YOU?
IN THE HALL, KEEPING LOOKOUT. NO MORE QUESTIONS, RAHNE, THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE!
WHO'S TALKIN', WHA'S GOIN' ON?!
DANI, YOU'RE WEARIN' ANIMAL SKINS!
I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT LATER-- THE LIGHTS!?!
SURPRISE.


Y'ALL'RE TAKIN' A BIG RISK, WALTZIN' IN HERE. THE INHIBITOR FIELD AFFECTS YOU AS WELL AS US.
AHA! THANKS, SAM--THAT EXPLAINS WHY MY SPIRIT-FORMS AREN'T APPEARING, AND WHY ILLYANA HASN'T SUMMONED A TELEPORT DISK.
HOW'D YOU KNOW WE WERE HERE?
YOUR USE OF THE TELEPHONE TRIGGERED AN ALARM.
WE ANSWERED IT.
WE JOINED THE HELLIONS BY CHOICE. SOME OF US DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF YOU BEING FORCED. ALSO, OUR INITIAL MEETING ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY.
WE WANT TO SEE HOW GOOD YOU TRULY ARE. AND HOW WELL WE STAND UP AGAINST YOU.
WE PROPOSE A DUEL-- ONE OF YOU VERSUS ONE OF US, IN OUR COMBAT ROOM. SHOULD YOU WIN, YOU ALL GO FREE.
LOSE, AND YOU STAY. WILLINGLY. NO MATTER WHAT.
YOUR PRECIOUS QUEEN SANCTIONS THIS CONTEST?
SHE KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT IT, HALF-BREED.
SHE'S IN BOSTON.
DECIDE, MUTANTS.
THE OFFER WON'T BE REPEATED.
THAT BRAVE USED A NERVE-PINCH ON ILLYANA. SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS! WHAT'LL I DO?! WE'LL BE HONOR BOUND BY OUR WORD, BUT WILL THE HELLIONS? WHY DO I HAVE TO MAKE THE DECISION?!
THE OTHERS LOOK TO ME AS TEAM LEADER. I GUESS THIS IS WHERE I PROVE MYSELF.
WE ACCEPT.
THE COMBAT ROOM IS ANALOGOUS TO THE X-MEN'S DANGER ROOM-- A TRAINING FACILITY WHEREIN MUTANTS LEARN TO PROPERLY UTILIZE THEIR VARIOUS ABILITIES -- INDEED, THE DESIGN WAS PIRATED BY THE HELLFIRE CLUB FROM XAVIER'S OWN COMPUTERS.
THERE, EACH SIDE CHOOSES ITS CHAMPION: THE HELLIONS, JETSTREAM; THE MUTANTS, SAM GUTHRIE-- CANNONBALL.
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE: WE CONTINUE UNTIL ONE OF US YIELDS. WE DO NOT TRY TO DELIBERATELY MAIM OR KILL THE OTHER. BEYOND THAT, ANYTHING GOES. AGREED?
WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, FELLA.
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, ILLYANA--PLEASE! WE MAY NEED YOU PRETTY SOON.

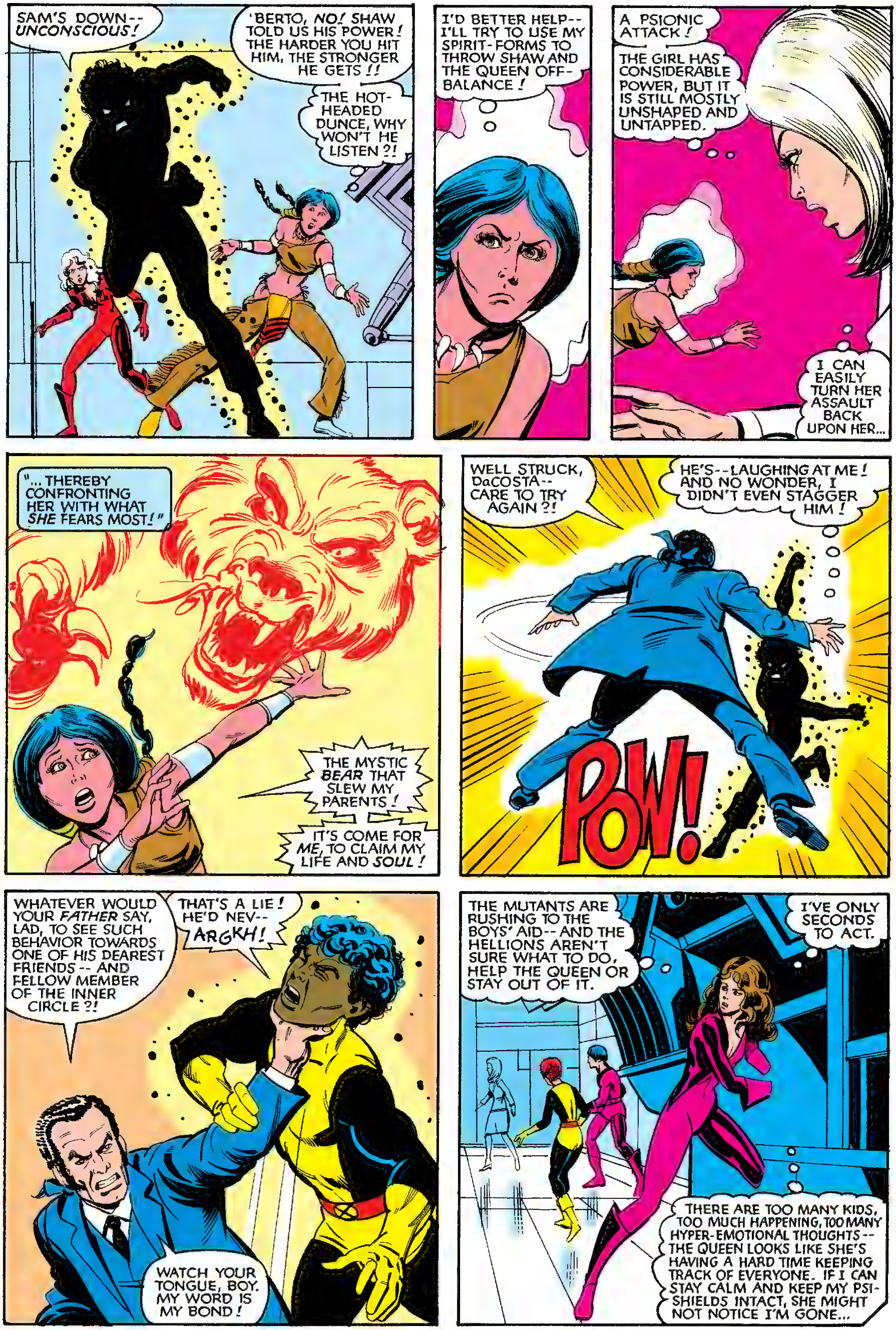

JETSTREAM, CANNONBALL, ON YOUR MARKS! I'M ACTIVATING THE ROOM--
KLIK
--NOW!
THIS AIN'T NOWHERE NEAR AS FANCY A SET-UP AS OURS. THE DANGER ROOM CAN CREATE ANY ENVIRONMENT WE WANT-- FROM REALITY OR OUR IMAGINATION-- WITH THE THREATS T' MATCH.
ALL THE HELLIONS HAVE IS A BUNCH'A CLUNKY MACHINES--
--YOW!!
WHEN CANNONBALL UTILIZES HIS FLYING POWER, HE BECOMES VIRTUALLY INVULNERABLE. HE'S IN NO REAL DANGER FROM THE BATONS...
...BUT SURPRISE MAKES HIM LOSE CONCENTRATION AND STOP BLASTING-- A PAINFUL, PERHAPS DEADLY, MISTAKE.
IS OUR DUEL OVER SO QUICKLY, CANNONBALL? I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD ALLOW ONE OF THE GIRLS TO TAKE YOUR PLACE...
... BEFORE IT'S TOO LA-- AIIULP!!

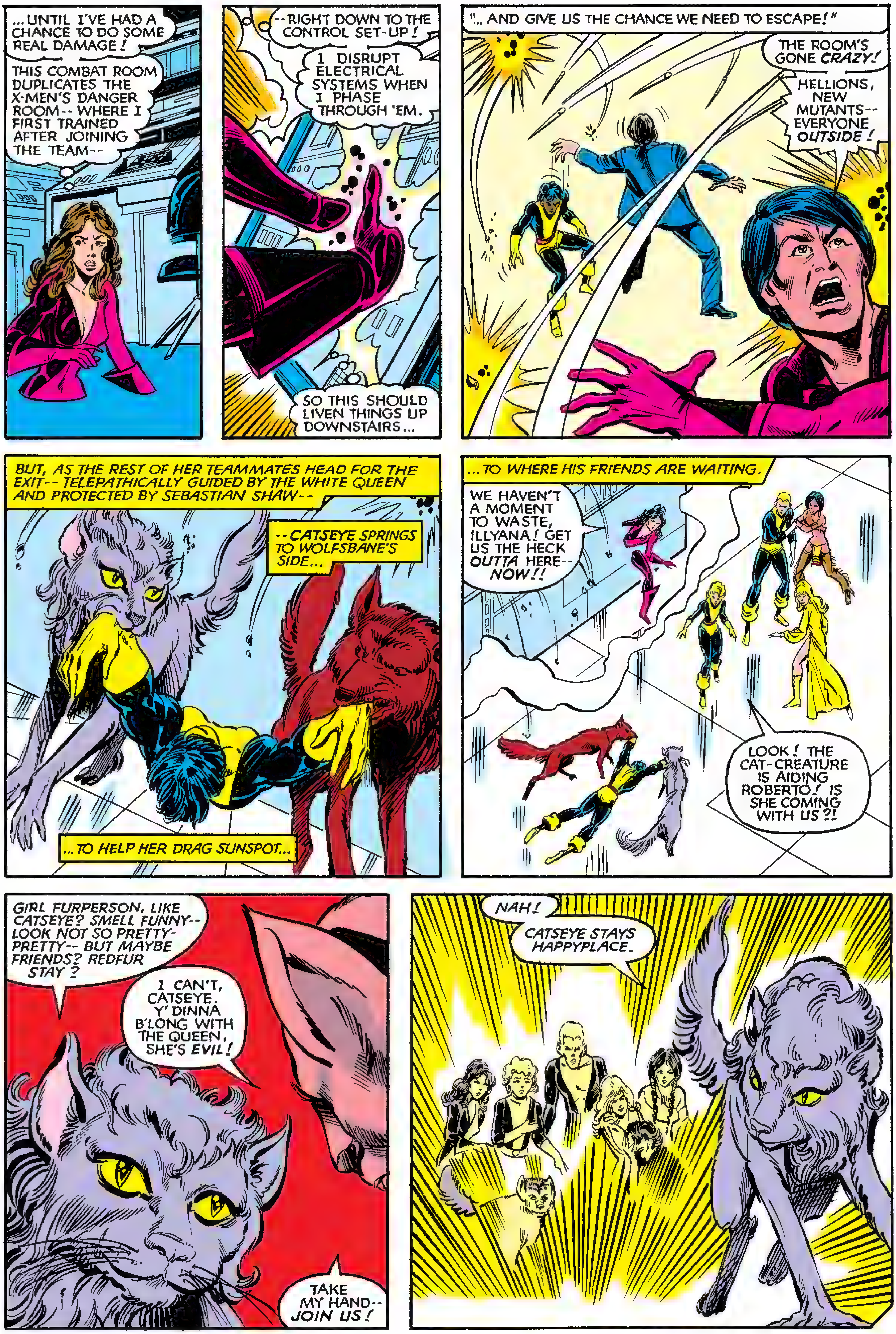

O-KAY! THE ROOM'S GOING AFTER JETSTREAM AS MUCH AS ME!
WE GOT US A FAIR FIGHT!
AH GOTTA ADMIT, AH DIDN'T EXPECT THAT.
IF AH CAN SNAG THIS BAR--
--MY MOMENTUM'LL SWING ME AROUND!
IT WAS SURE NICE O' NIGHTCRAWLER T' TEACH ME THIS STUNT; HE MAY LOOK CREEPY AS SIN, BUT HE'S A PRETTY NICE GUY.
NOW AH'LL KICK IN THE JUICE...
...AN' OPEN ROUND TWO BY PUNCHIN' JET'S LIGHTS OUT!
CANNONBALL!
ALL TIED UP, PAL? WHAT A SHAME-- BUT AH'LL HAVE YOU OUTTA THERE IN A JIFF. JUST HOLD THAT POSE!
I CAN FREE MYSELF, THANK YOU.
CRIPES, THE CEILING!
BOOM!
CLUMSY OAF! YOU MAY BE MORE POWERFUL, AMERICAN...
...BUT I CAN MANEUVER.
BRAVO HAMAHL!
SAM! YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!
BE CAREFUL, SAM! I DINNA WANT T' SEE YOU HURT!

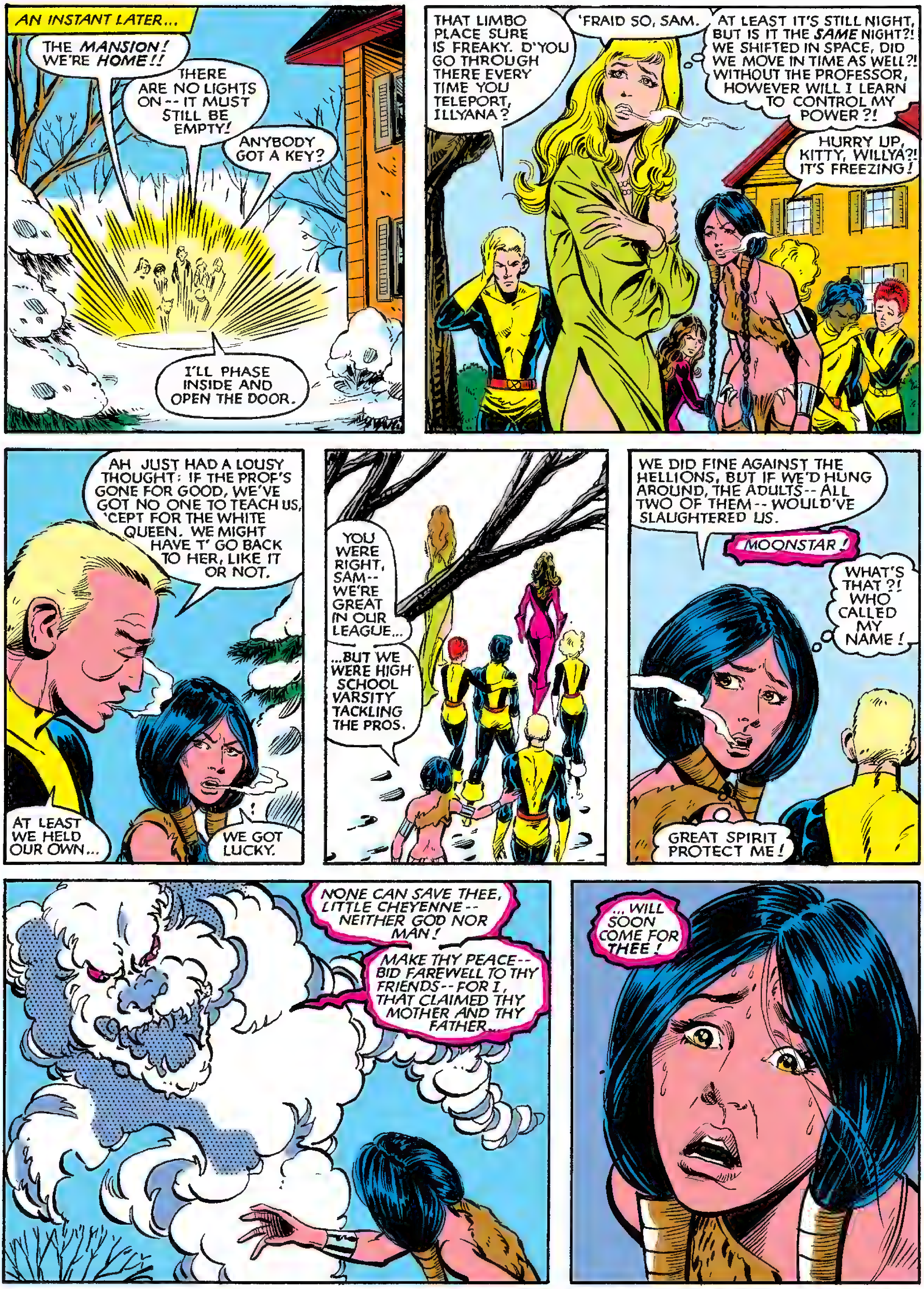

THE OTHERS'RE COUNTIN' ON ME! AH CAN'T-- AH *WON'T*-- LET 'EM DOWN!
WHERE'D JETSTREAM GO--
OUONFFF!!
ZOOOM!
HAPPY LANDINGS, CANNONBALL!
WHOMP!
HE'S MAKIN' ME LOOK LIKE A *FOOL*!
AN' AH'M MAKIN' IT *EASY* FOR HIM!
AH'M GLAD THE *PROFESSOR* ISN'T HERE T' SEE THIS.
"GREAT-- THINGS'RE GOIN' FROM BAD T' WORSE! WRECKAGE FROM THAT GADGET AH BUSTED IS FALLIN' T'WARDS TH' MUTANTS!
"AMARA-- *LOOK OUT!*"
STOP LETTING JETSTREAM CONTROL THE MATCH, SAM! YOU HAVE A BRAIN, *USE IT!*
*MANEUVER 7-- THE MAGNUM VARIATION!*
BE SILENT, DWARF! THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND YOUR FRIEND, ALONE!
NO ONE SAID WE COULDN'T OFFER ADVICE. AND, HEY, FLY-BOY-- THE *NEXT* TIME YOU TRY A CRACK LIKE THAT WILL BE THE *LAST*!


I'M AS IMPRESSED AS I AM SCARED -- WHICH IS NOT AT ALL.
A SUPERB STRATEGEM, TELLING CANNONBALL TO RUN AWAY. DO YOU CHILDREN USE IT OFTEN?
DON'T SWEAT IT, BUSTER --
--AH AIN'T GOIN' FAR!
KLUDD!
HAMAHL!
HE'S A LITTLE BLOODY, T-BIRD, BUT NOTHIN'S BUSTED.
THIS FALL WON'T EVEN DO MORE'N KNOCK THE WIND OUTTA HIM.
SPARE YOURSELF SOME GRIEF, JETSTREAM -- GIVE UP!
NEVER!
YOU PROVED YOUR POINT. YOU'VE GOT SKILL AN' GUTS TO SPARE. YOU GOT NOTHIN' T' BE ASHAMED OF. THE BETTER MAN WON, THAT'S ALL.
LET'S CALL THIS QUITS B'FORE SOMEONE REALLY GETS HURT.
THEN YOU SURRENDER! I WILL DIE BEFORE I YIELD!
TALK SOME SENSE INTA THIS JERK, WILLYA, THUNDERBIRD? YOU LOST -- EVEN IF YOUR CHAMPION'S TOO STUBBORN TO ADMIT IT. THAT MEANS WE CAN LEAVE...
IT DOES?
WHO--?! OH, SHOOT!

IT APPEARS, MY DEAR EMMA, WE'VE ARRIVED AT AN AWKWARD MOMENT.
I AM *SEBASTIAN SHAW*, YOUNG MAN, MASTER OF THE *INNER CIRCLE*. WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF ?
WE MADE A DEAL, A ONE-ON-ONE DUEL FOR OUR FREEDOM.
AH DIDN'T THINK WE'D GET OUT, EVEN IF WE WON, BUT IT WAS WORTH THE TRY.
FASCINATING. WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS ?
WE... ALL AGREED TO IT, SIR. WE'LL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY.
HOW NOBLE, JAMES. TELL ME, THOUGH, BY WHAT STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION--
--BY WHAT *RIGHT*-- DO YOU *DARE* USURP MY AUTHORITY?!
YOU MAY PROMISE WHAT YOU LIKE, BUT AT MY SCHOOL *MY* WORD IS LAW. I WAS NOT PARTY TO YOUR ARRANGEMENT AND DO NOT CONSIDER MYSELF BOUND BY IT.
"RETURN TO YOUR ROOMS, CHILDREN. APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE WILL WAIT UNTIL MORNING."
THE NEW MUTANTS'RE GOIN' NOWHERE, LADY-- 'CEPT *HOME!*
RUN FOR IT, GUYS!
AH'LL COVER YOU!
MOST IMPRESSIVE, LAD. THIS IMPACT WOULD HAVE STUNNED EMMA AND ME BOTH...
THOOM!
...WERE IT NOT FOR MY OWN MUTANT ABILITY TO ABSORB THE FORCE OF ANY BLOW...
... AND TRANSFORM IT INTO *STRENGTH!*
WHAMMO!


SAM'S DOWN-- *UNCONSCIOUS!*
'BERTO, *NO!* SHAW TOLD US HIS POWER! THE HARDER YOU HIT HIM, THE STRONGER HE GETS!!
THE HOT-HEADED DUNCE, WHY WON'T HE LISTEN?!
I'D BETTER HELP-- I'LL TRY TO USE MY SPIRIT-FORMS TO THROW SHAW AND THE QUEEN OFF-BALANCE!
A PSIONIC ATTACK!
THE GIRL HAS CONSIDERABLE POWER, BUT IT IS STILL MOSTLY UNSHAPED AND UNTAPPED.
I CAN EASILY TURN HER ASSAULT BACK UPON HER...
"...THEREBY CONFRONTING HER WITH WHAT *SHE* FEARS MOST!"
THE MYSTIC *BEAR* THAT SLEW MY PARENTS!
IT'S COME FOR *ME*, TO CLAIM MY LIFE AND *SOUL*!
WELL STRUCK, DaCOSTA-- CARE TO TRY AGAIN?!
HE'S--LAUGHING AT ME! AND NO WONDER, I DIDN'T EVEN STAGGER HIM!
POW!
WHATEVER WOULD YOUR *FATHER* SAY, LAD, TO SEE SUCH BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ONE OF *HIS* DEAREST FRIENDS-- AND FELLOW MEMBER OF THE INNER CIRCLE?!
THAT'S A LIE! HE'D NEV-- ARGKH!
WATCH YOUR TONGUE, BOY. MY WORD IS MY BOND!
THE MUTANTS ARE RUSHING TO THE BOYS' AID-- AND THE HELLIONS AREN'T SURE WHAT TO DO, HELP THE QUEEN OR STAY OUT OF IT.
I'VE ONLY SECONDS TO ACT.
THERE ARE TOO MANY KIDS, TOO MUCH HAPPENING, TOO MANY HYPER-EMOTIONAL THOUGHTS-- THE QUEEN LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HAVING A HARD TIME KEEPING TRACK OF EVERYONE. IF I CAN STAY CALM AND KEEP MY PSI-SHIELDS INTACT, SHE MIGHT NOT NOTICE I'M GONE...


...UNTIL I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO DO SOME REAL DAMAGE!
THIS COMBAT ROOM DUPLICATES THE X-MEN'S DANGER ROOM-- WHERE I FIRST TRAINED AFTER JOINING THE TEAM--
--RIGHT DOWN TO THE CONTROL SET-UP!
I DISRUPT ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS WHEN I PHASE THROUGH 'EM.
SO THIS SHOULD LIVEN THINGS UP DOWNSTAIRS...
"...AND GIVE US THE CHANCE WE NEED TO ESCAPE!"
THE ROOM'S GONE CRAZY!
HELLIONS, NEW MUTANTS-- EVERYONE OUTSIDE!
BUT, AS THE REST OF HER TEAMMATES HEAD FOR THE EXIT-- TELEPATHICALLY GUIDED BY THE WHITE QUEEN AND PROTECTED BY SEBASTIAN SHAW--
--CATSEYE SPRINGS TO WOLFSBANE'S SIDE...
...TO HELP HER DRAG SUNSPOT...
...TO WHERE HIS FRIENDS ARE WAITING.
WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO WASTE, ILLYANA! GET US THE HECK OUTTA HERE-- NOW!!
LOOK! THE CAT-CREATURE IS AIDING ROBERTO! IS SHE COMING WITH US?!
GIRL FURPERSON, LIKE CATSEYE? SMELL FUNNY-- LOOK NOT SO PRETTY-PRETTY-- BUT MAYBE FRIENDS? REDFUR STAY?
I CAN'T, CATSEYE. Y'DINNA B'LONG WITH THE QUEEN, SHE'S EVIL!
TAKE MY HAND-- JOIN US!
NAH!
CATSEYE STAYS HAPPYPLACE.


AN INSTANT LATER...
THE *MANSION!* WE'RE *HOME!!*
THERE ARE NO LIGHTS ON -- IT MUST STILL BE EMPTY!
ANYBODY GOT A KEY?
I'LL PHASE INSIDE AND OPEN THE DOOR.
THAT LIMBO PLACE SURE IS FREAKY. D'YOU GO THROUGH THERE EVERY TIME YOU TELEPORT, ILLYANA?
'FRAID SO, SAM.
AT LEAST IT'S STILL NIGHT, BUT IS IT THE *SAME* NIGHT?! WE SHIFTED IN SPACE, DID WE MOVE IN TIME AS WELL?! WITHOUT THE PROFESSOR, HOWEVER WILL I LEARN TO CONTROL MY POWER?!
HURRY UP, KITTY, WILLYA?! IT'S FREEZING!
AH JUST HAD A LOUSY THOUGHT: IF THE PROF'S GONE FOR GOOD, WE'VE GOT NO ONE TO TEACH US, 'CEPT FOR THE WHITE QUEEN. WE MIGHT HAVE T' GO BACK TO HER, LIKE IT OR NOT.
AT LEAST WE HELD OUR OWN...
WE GOT LUCKY.
YOU WERE RIGHT, SAM -- WE'RE GREAT IN OUR LEAGUE...
...BUT WE WERE HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY TACKLING THE PROS.
WE DID FINE AGAINST THE HELLIONS, BUT IF WE'D HUNG AROUND, THE ADULTS -- ALL TWO OF THEM -- WOULD'VE SLAUGHTERED US.
*MOONSTAR!*
WHAT'S THAT?! WHO CALLED MY NAME!
GREAT SPIRIT PROTECT ME!
*NONE CAN SAVE THEE, LITTLE CHEYENNE -- NEITHER GOD NOR MAN!*
*MAKE THY PEACE -- BID FAREWELL TO THY FRIENDS -- FOR I, THAT CLAIMED THY MOTHER AND THY FATHER...*
*... WILL SOON COME FOR THEE!*

**NEXT:** BILL SIENKIEWICZ'S *FIRST ISSUE!* DANIELLE MOONSTAR'S *LAST STAND!* AND *MUCH, MUCH* **MORE!**

# DEATHHUNT!

*NEW MUTANTS #18–21* COVER PAINTINGS BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

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THE NEW MUTANTS
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DEMON BEAR!
Sienkiewicz

# DEATH-HUNT

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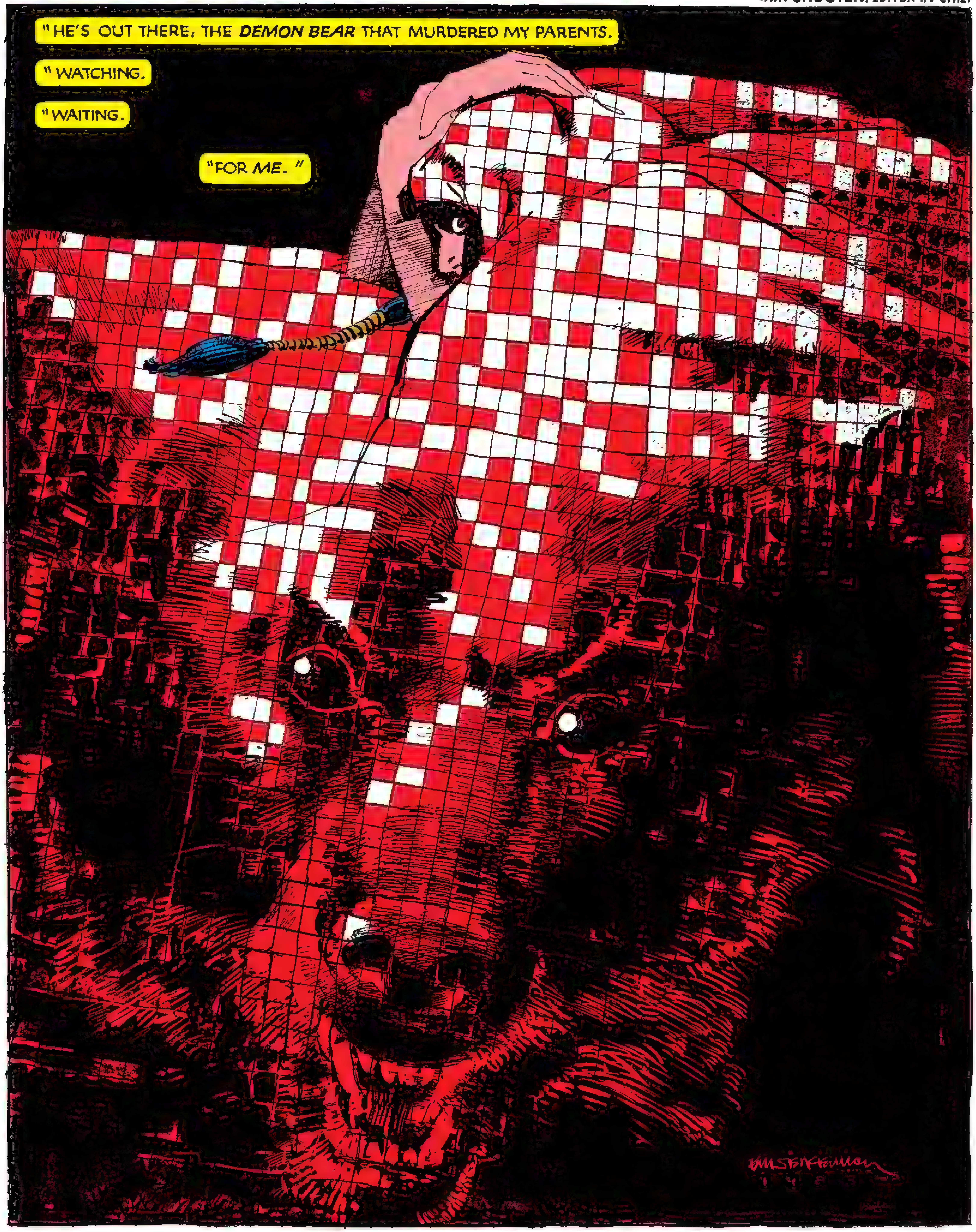
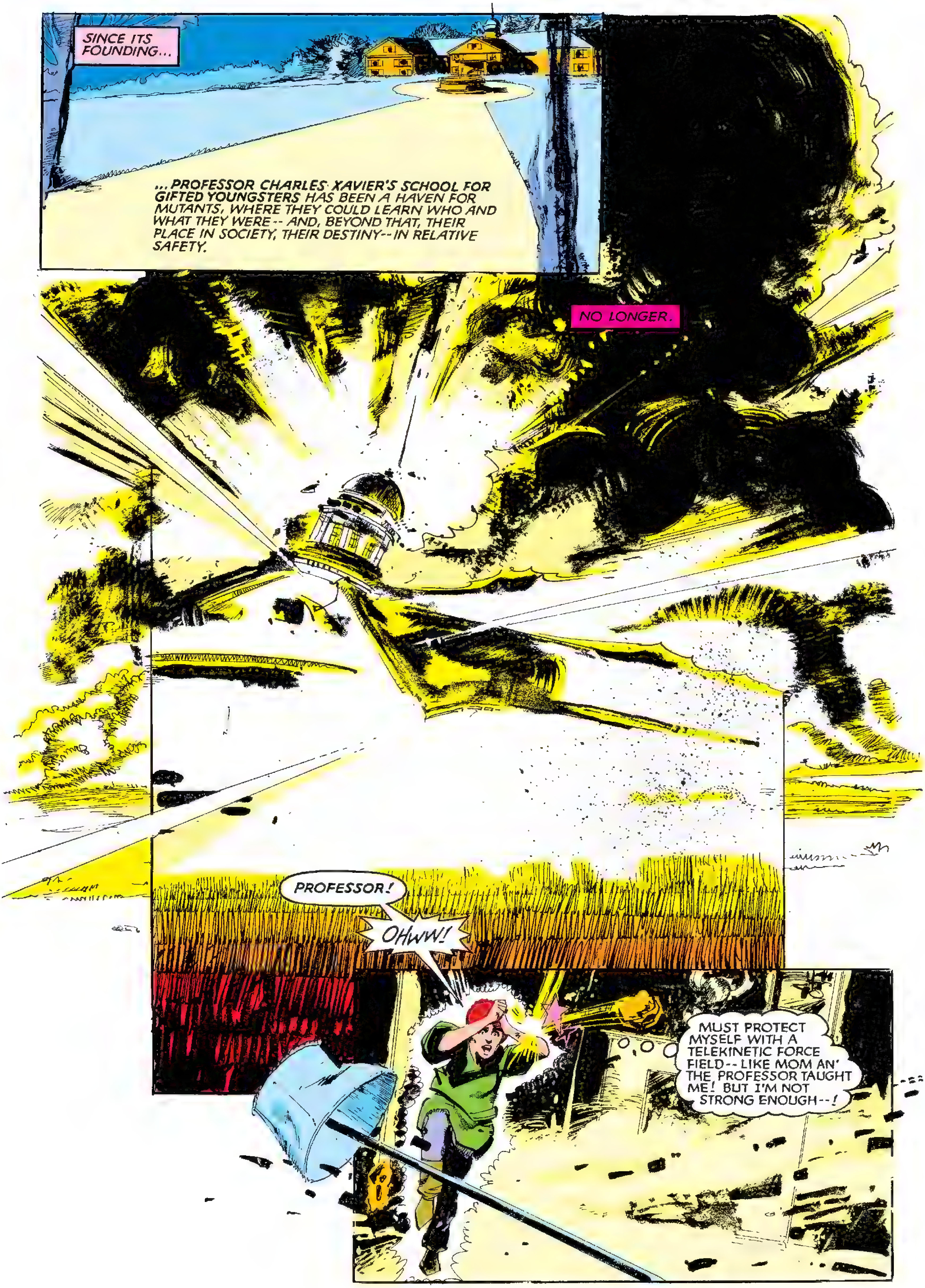
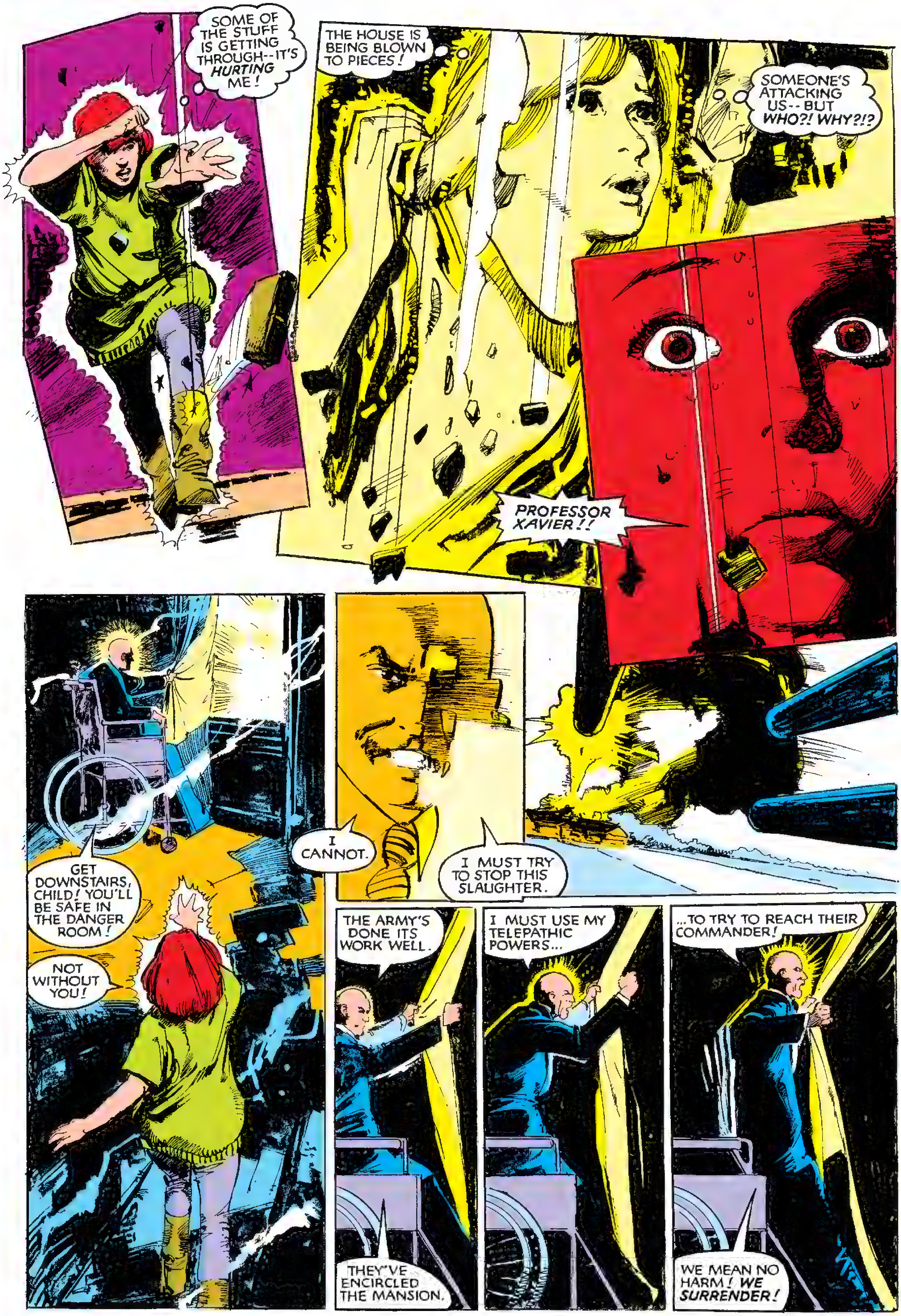
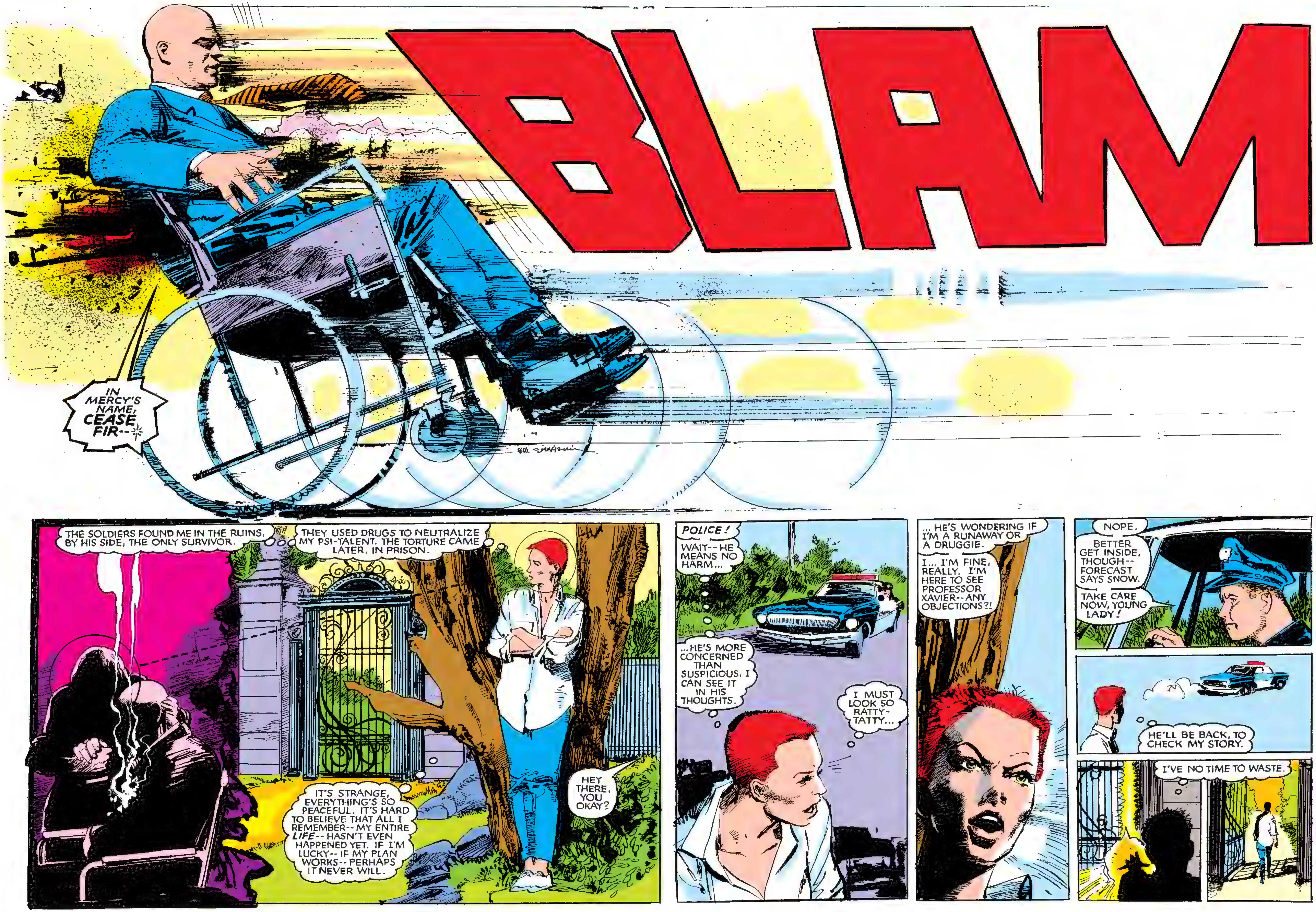
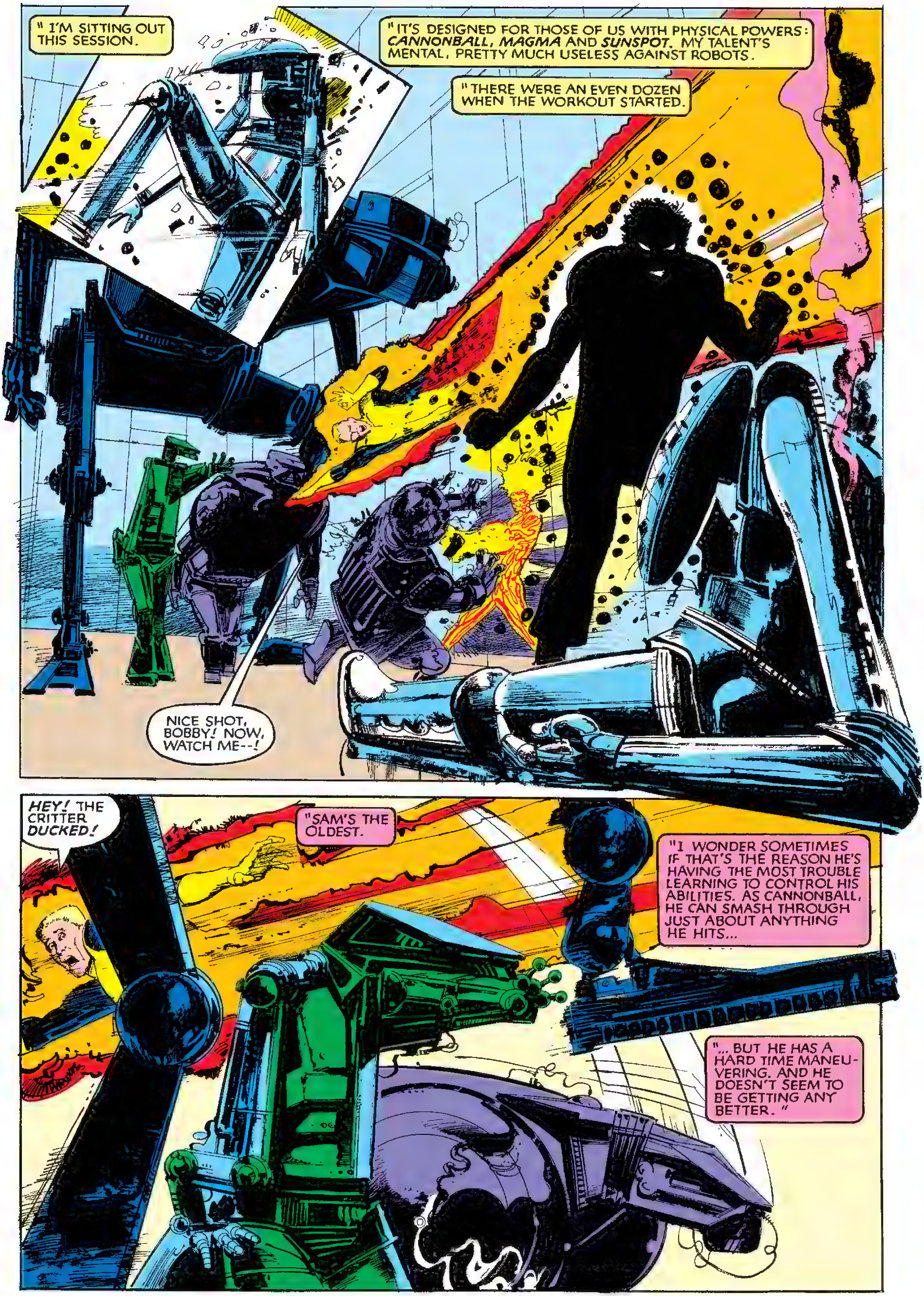
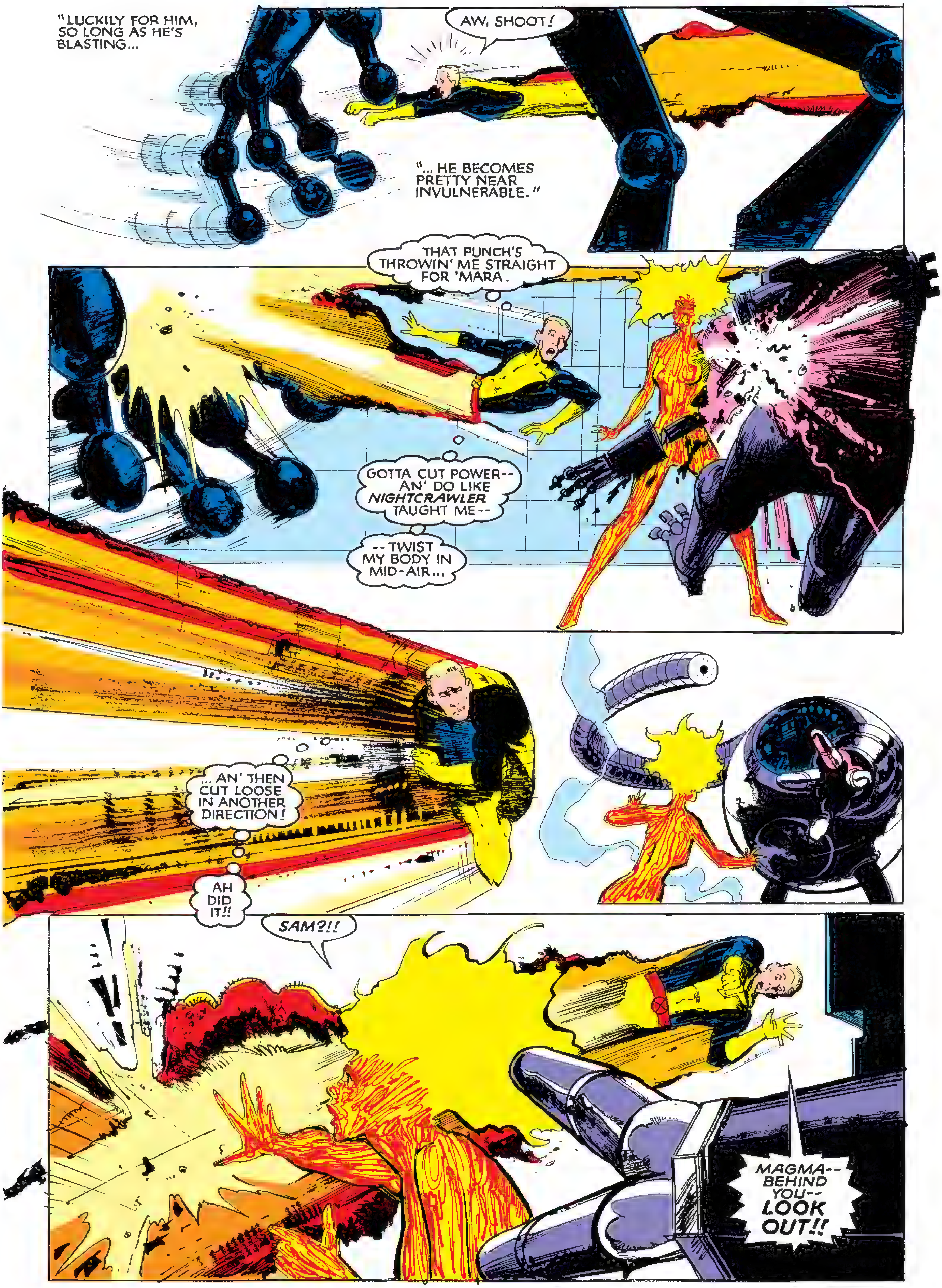

"HE'S OUT THERE, THE *DEMON BEAR* THAT MURDERED MY PARENTS.
"WATCHING.
"WAITING.
"FOR *ME.*"

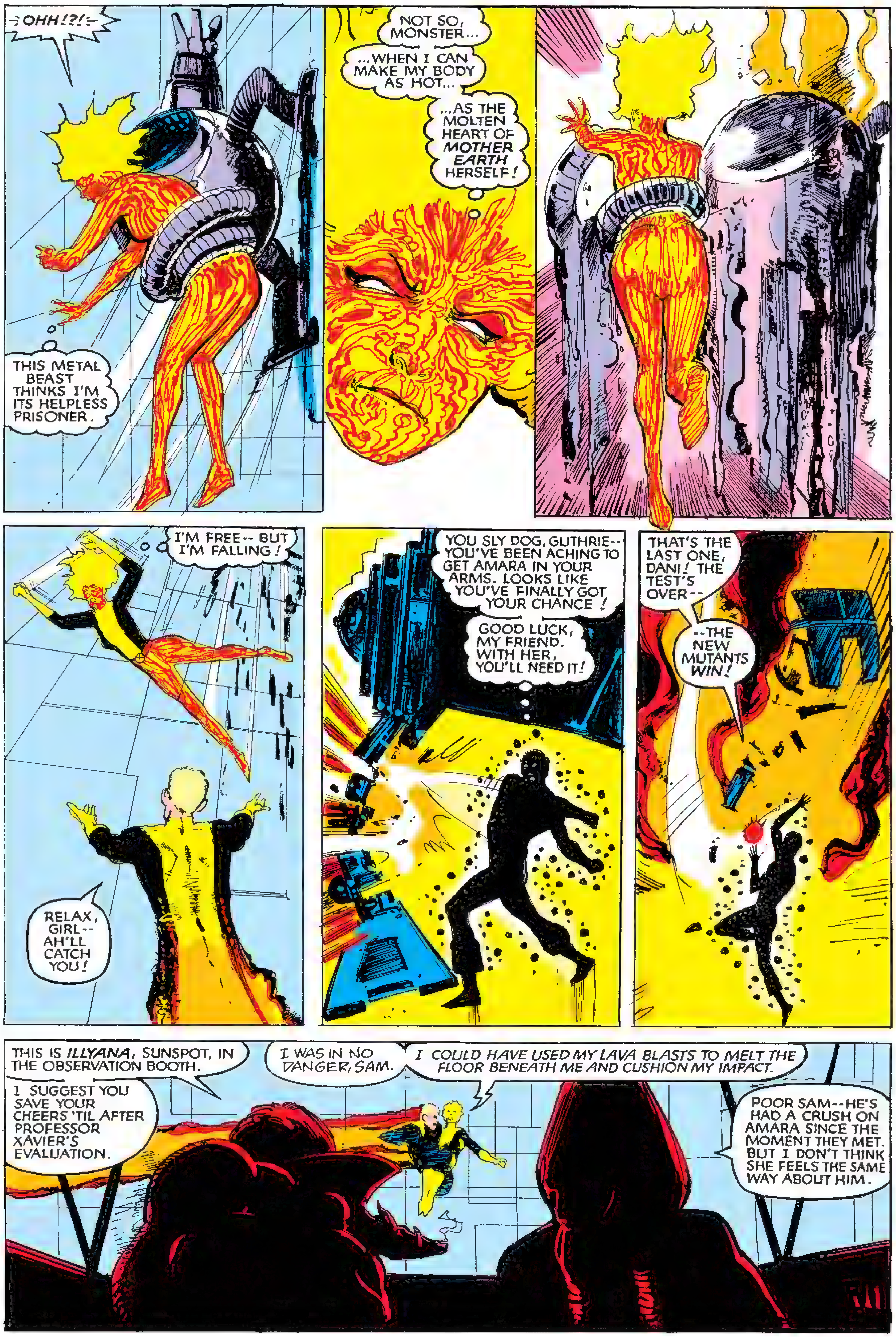

SINCE ITS FOUNDING...
...PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS HAS BEEN A HAVEN FOR MUTANTS, WHERE THEY COULD LEARN WHO AND WHAT THEY WERE-- AND, BEYOND THAT, THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY, THEIR DESTINY-- IN RELATIVE SAFETY.
NO LONGER.
PROFESSOR!
OHWW!
MUST PROTECT MYSELF WITH A TELEKINETIC FORCE FIELD-- LIKE MOM AN' THE PROFESSOR TAUGHT ME! BUT I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH--!

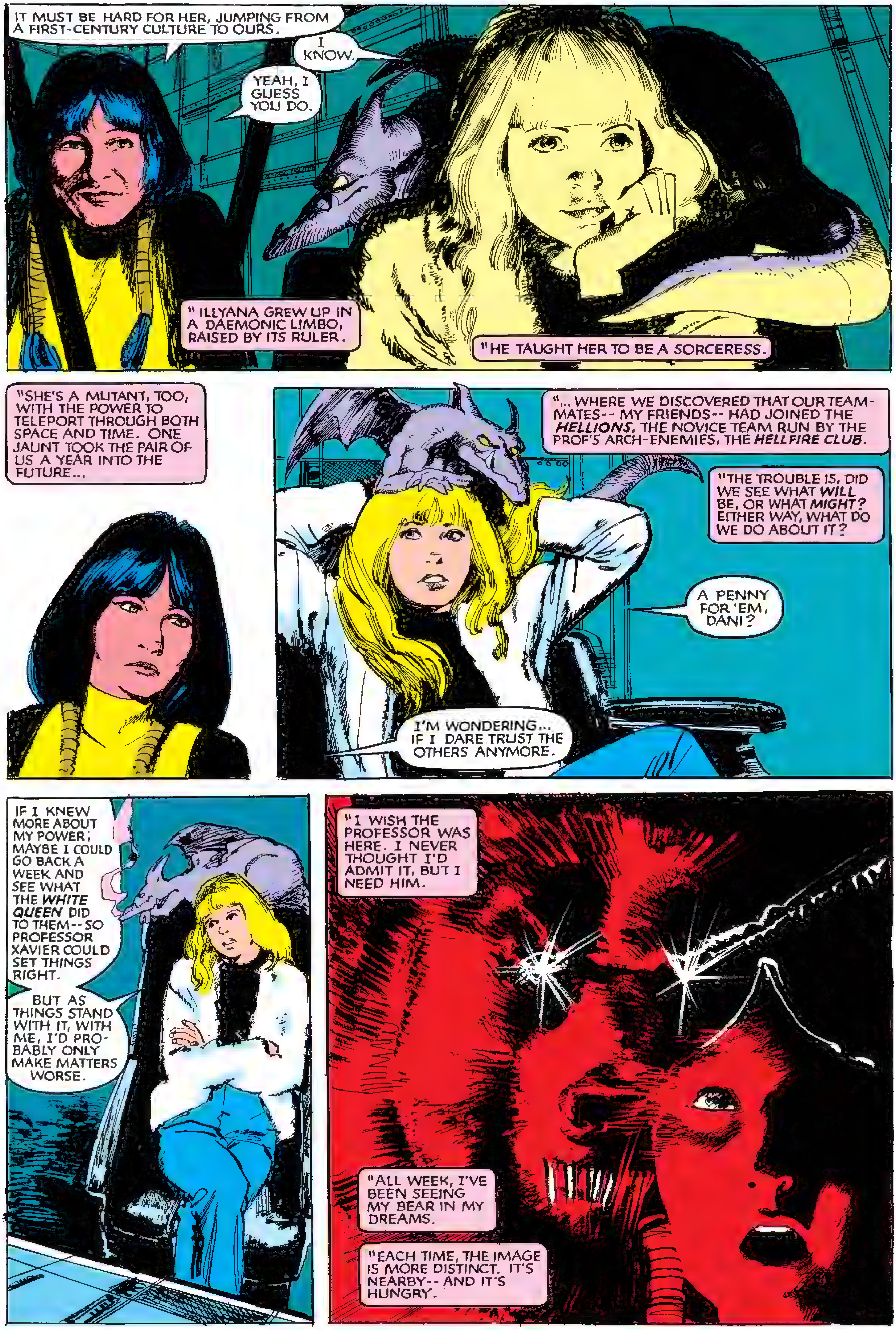

SOME OF THE STUFF IS GETTING THROUGH--IT'S *HURTING* ME!
THE HOUSE IS BEING BLOWN TO PIECES!
SOMEONE'S ATTACKING US-- BUT *WHO?! WHY?!?*
*PROFESSOR XAVIER!!*
GET DOWNSTAIRS, CHILD! YOU'LL BE SAFE IN THE DANGER ROOM!
NOT WITHOUT YOU!
I CANNOT.
I MUST TRY TO STOP THIS SLAUGHTER.
THE ARMY'S DONE ITS WORK WELL.
THEY'VE ENCIRCLED THE MANSION.
I MUST USE MY TELEPATHIC POWERS...
...TO TRY TO REACH THEIR COMMANDER!
WE MEAN NO HARM! *WE SURRENDER!*


BLAM
IN MERCY'S NAME, CEASE FIR--
THE SOLDIERS FOUND ME IN THE RUINS, BY HIS SIDE, THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
THEY USED DRUGS TO NEUTRALIZE MY PSI-TALENT. THE TORTURE CAME LATER, IN PRISON.
IT'S STRANGE, EVERYTHING'S SO PEACEFUL. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ALL I REMEMBER-- MY ENTIRE LIFE-- HASN'T EVEN HAPPENED YET. IF I'M LUCKY-- IF MY PLAN WORKS-- PERHAPS IT NEVER WILL.
HEY THERE, YOU OKAY?
POLICE!
WAIT-- HE MEANS NO HARM...
...HE'S MORE CONCERNED THAN SUSPICIOUS. I CAN SEE IT IN HIS THOUGHTS.
I MUST LOOK SO RATTY-TATTY...
... HE'S WONDERING IF I'M A RUNAWAY OR A DRUGGIE.
I... I'M FINE, REALLY. I'M HERE TO SEE PROFESSOR XAVIER-- ANY OBJECTIONS?!
NOPE.
BETTER GET INSIDE, THOUGH-- FORECAST SAYS SNOW.
TAKE CARE NOW, YOUNG LADY!
HE'LL BE BACK, TO CHECK MY STORY.
I'VE NO TIME TO WASTE.

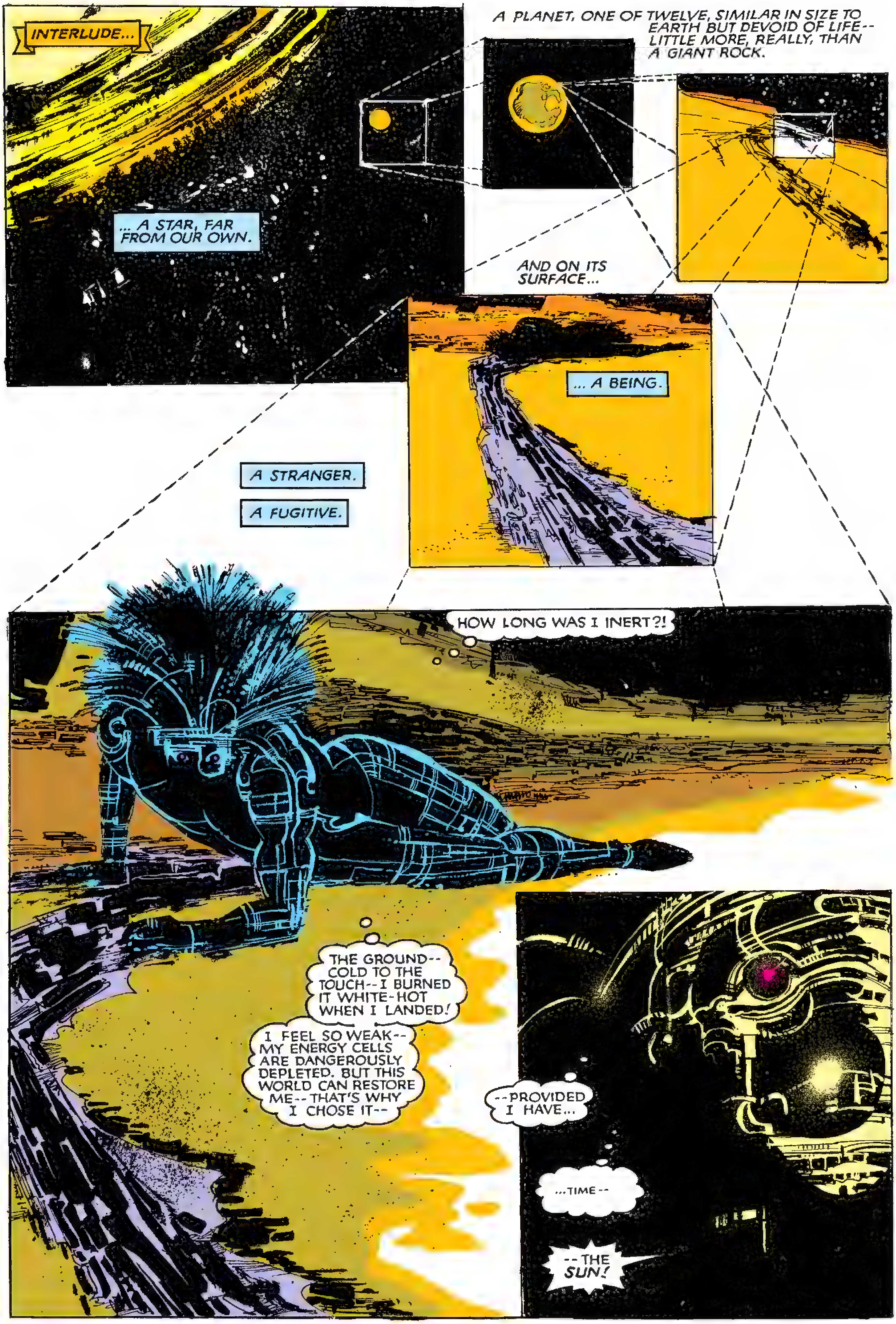

"I'M SITTING OUT THIS SESSION.
"IT'S DESIGNED FOR THOSE OF US WITH PHYSICAL POWERS: ***CANNONBALL***, ***MAGMA*** AND ***SUNSPOT***. MY TALENT'S MENTAL, PRETTY MUCH USELESS AGAINST ROBOTS.
"THERE WERE AN EVEN DOZEN WHEN THE WORKOUT STARTED.
NICE SHOT, BOBBY! NOW, WATCH ME--!
***HEY!*** THE CRITTER ***DUCKED!***
"SAM'S THE OLDEST.
"I WONDER SOMETIMES IF THAT'S THE REASON HE'S HAVING THE MOST TROUBLE LEARNING TO CONTROL HIS ABILITIES. AS CANNONBALL, HE CAN SMASH THROUGH JUST ABOUT ANYTHING HE HITS...
"... BUT HE HAS A HARD TIME MANEUVERING. AND HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE GETTING ANY BETTER."

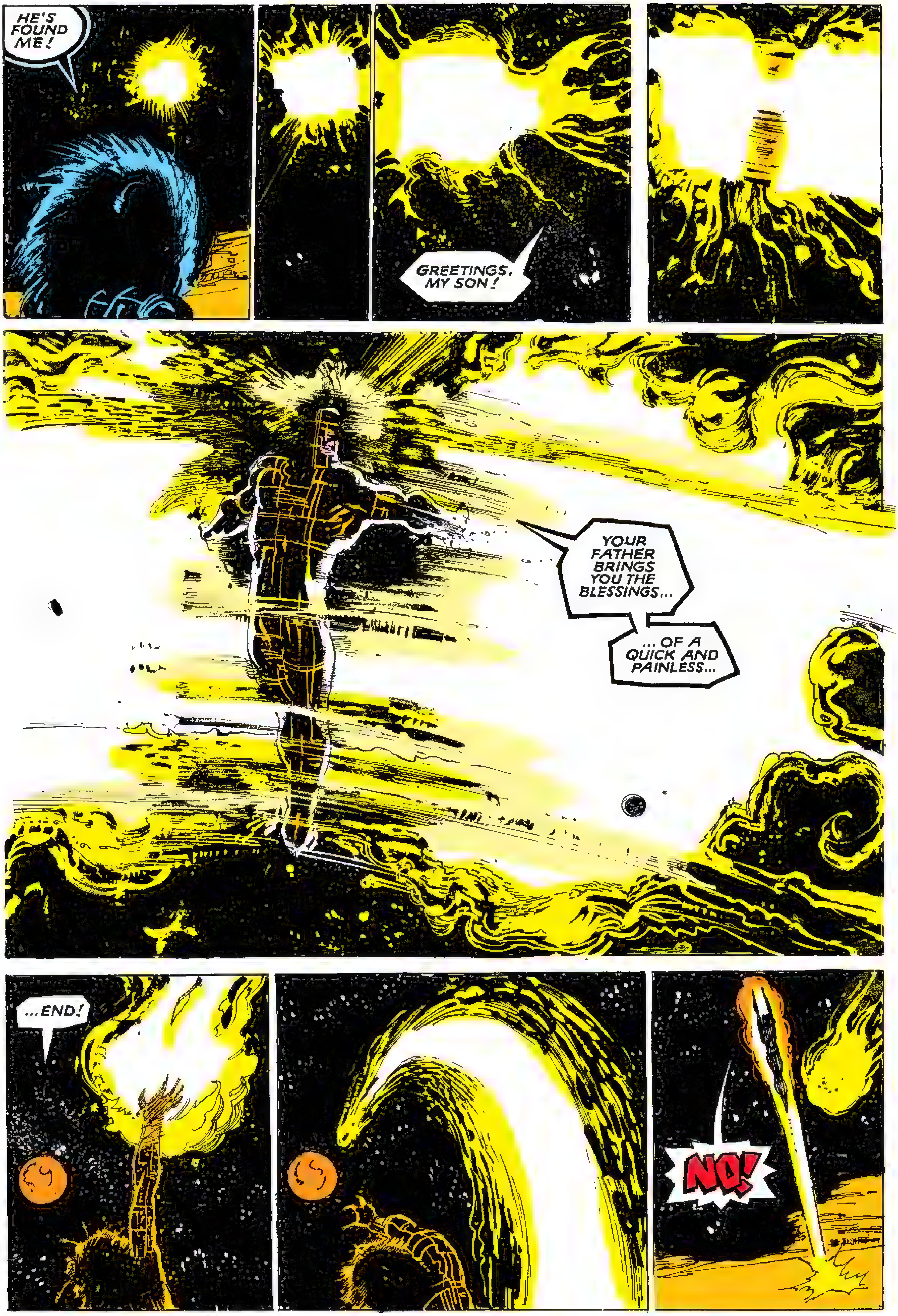

"LUCKILY FOR HIM, SO LONG AS HE'S BLASTING...
AW, SHOOT!
"... HE BECOMES PRETTY NEAR INVULNERABLE."
THAT PUNCH'S THROWIN' ME STRAIGHT FOR 'MARA.
GOTTA CUT POWER-- AN' DO LIKE *NIGHTCRAWLER* TAUGHT ME--
-- TWIST MY BODY IN MID-AIR...
... AN' THEN CUT LOOSE IN ANOTHER DIRECTION!
AH DID IT!!
*SAM?!!*
*MAGMA-- BEHIND YOU-- **LOOK OUT!!***


-OHH!?!-
THIS METAL BEAST THINKS I'M ITS HELPLESS PRISONER.
NOT SO, MONSTER...
...WHEN I CAN MAKE MY BODY AS HOT...
...AS THE MOLTEN HEART OF MOTHER EARTH HERSELF!
I'M FREE-- BUT I'M FALLING!
RELAX, GIRL-- AH'LL CATCH YOU!
YOU SLY DOG, GUTHRIE-- YOU'VE BEEN ACHING TO GET AMARA IN YOUR ARMS. LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE FINALLY GOT YOUR CHANCE!
GOOD LUCK, MY FRIEND. WITH HER, YOU'LL NEED IT!
THAT'S THE LAST ONE, DANI! THE TEST'S OVER--
--THE NEW MUTANTS WIN!
THIS IS ILLYANA, SUNSPOT, IN THE OBSERVATION BOOTH.
I SUGGEST YOU SAVE YOUR CHEERS 'TIL AFTER PROFESSOR XAVIER'S EVALUATION.
I WAS IN NO DANGER, SAM.
I COULD HAVE USED MY LAVA BLASTS TO MELT THE FLOOR BENEATH ME AND CUSHION MY IMPACT.
POOR SAM--HE'S HAD A CRUSH ON AMARA SINCE THE MOMENT THEY MET. BUT I DON'T THINK SHE FEELS THE SAME WAY ABOUT HIM.

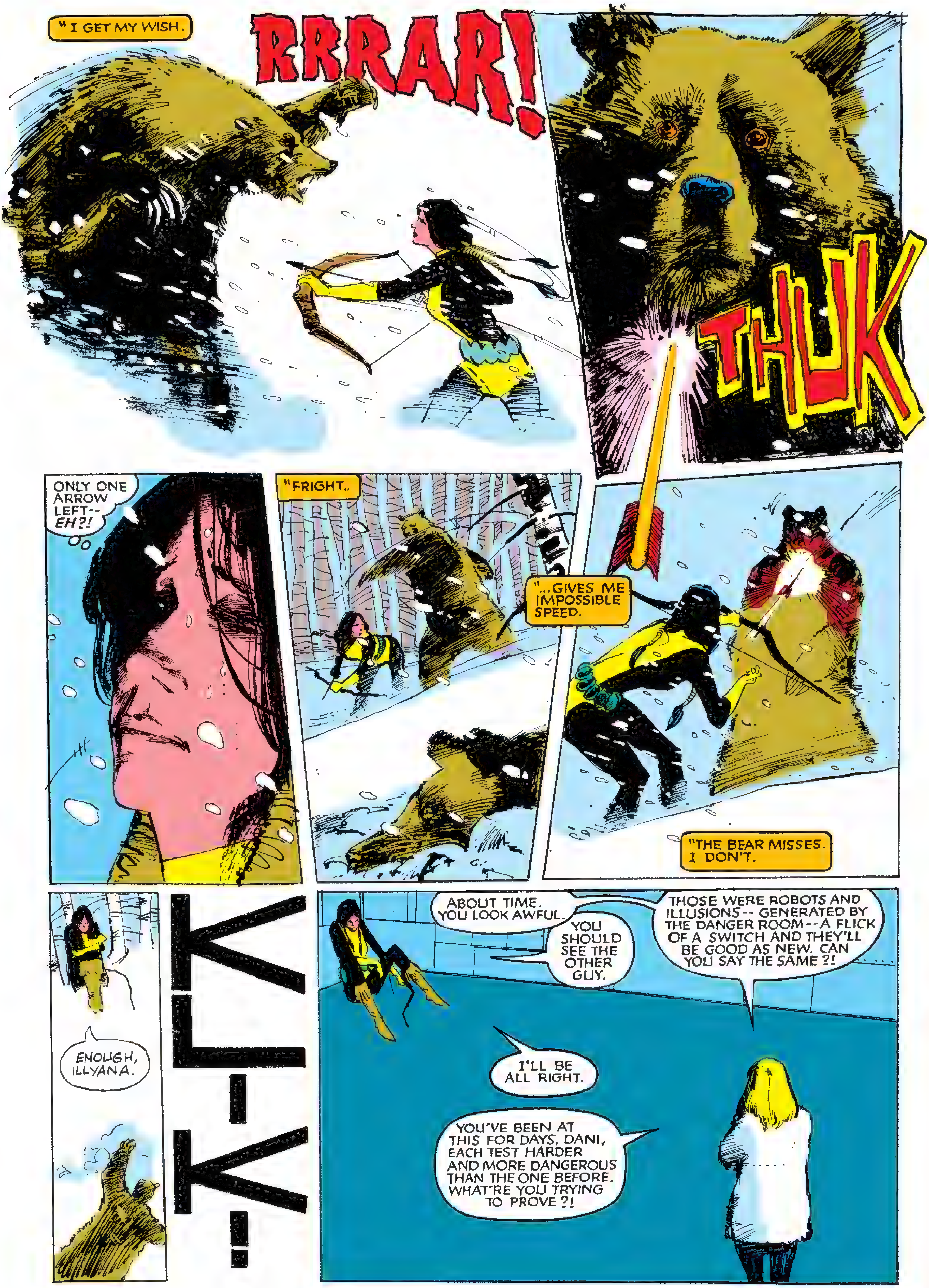

IT MUST BE HARD FOR HER, JUMPING FROM A FIRST-CENTURY CULTURE TO OURS.
I KNOW.
YEAH, I GUESS YOU DO.
"ILLYANA GREW UP IN A DAEMONIC LIMBO, RAISED BY ITS RULER.
"HE TAUGHT HER TO BE A SORCERESS.
"SHE'S A MUTANT, TOO, WITH THE POWER TO TELEPORT THROUGH BOTH SPACE AND TIME. ONE JAUNT TOOK THE PAIR OF US A YEAR INTO THE FUTURE...
"...WHERE WE DISCOVERED THAT OUR TEAM-MATES-- MY FRIENDS-- HAD JOINED THE ***HELLIONS***, THE NOVICE TEAM RUN BY THE PROF'S ARCH-ENEMIES, THE ***HELLFIRE CLUB***.
"THE TROUBLE IS, DID WE SEE WHAT ***WILL*** BE, OR WHAT ***MIGHT?*** EITHER WAY, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?
A PENNY FOR 'EM, DANI?
I'M WONDERING... IF I DARE TRUST THE OTHERS ANYMORE.
IF I KNEW MORE ABOUT MY POWER, MAYBE I COULD GO BACK A WEEK AND SEE WHAT THE ***WHITE QUEEN*** DID TO THEM-- SO PROFESSOR XAVIER COULD SET THINGS RIGHT.
BUT AS THINGS STAND WITH IT, WITH ME, I'D PROBABLY ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE.
"I WISH THE PROFESSOR WAS HERE. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D ADMIT IT, BUT I NEED HIM.
"ALL WEEK, I'VE BEEN SEEING MY BEAR IN MY DREAMS.
"EACH TIME, THE IMAGE IS MORE DISTINCT. IT'S NEARBY-- AND IT'S HUNGRY.

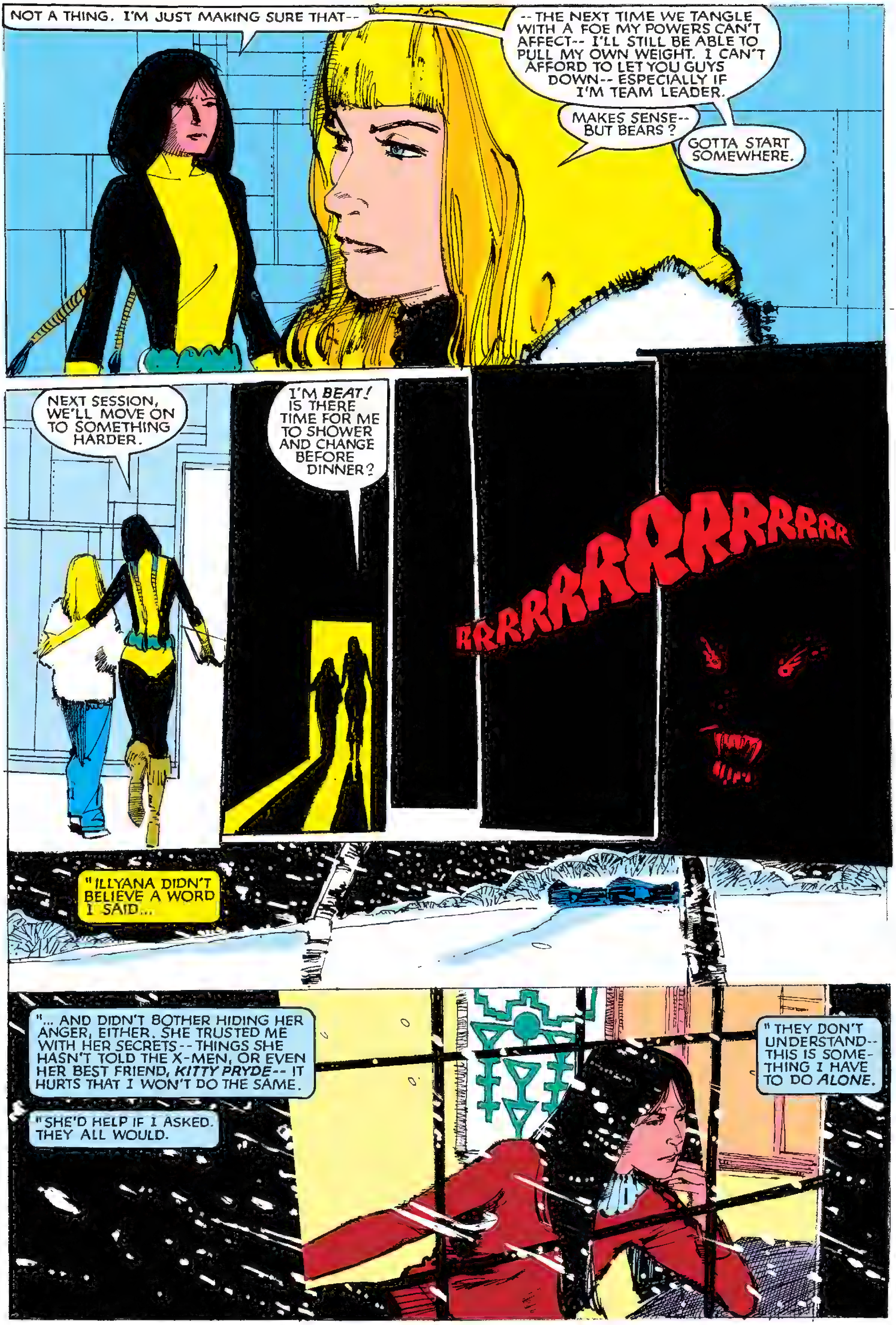
"ILLYANA SENSES SOMETHING'S WRONG-- SHE'S ASKED POINT-BLANK-- BUT I DODGED HER QUESTIONS. THERE'S A PART OF HER THAT'S AS *EVIL* AS THE BEAR. SHE FRIGHTENS ME. SHE SENSES THAT, TOO."
WHUP??
THE *DOORBELL*--!
HOLD THE FORT, DANI!
I'LL ANSWER IT!
SHOO, LOCKHEED! NO VISITORS ARE SUPPOSED TO SEE YOU!
*PFUI!*
HUSH, DRAGON!
HI, CAN I HELP YOU?
PROFESSOR XAVIER, PLEASE. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT-- I... I...
IT *CAN'T* BE--!
I'M AWFULLY SORRY, HE'S AWAY IN MASSACHUSETTS. HE SHOULD BE BACK TOMORROW.
EXCUSE ME, BUT WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
*ILLYANA RASPUTIN.*
CAN I GIVE HIM A MESSAGE IF HE PHONES?
HEY, *WAIT!* WHY ARE YOU *RUNNING*--?!
WHO *ARE* YOU?!!
NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!
WHAT HAVE I *DONE?!?*
SHE SAID SHE WAS COLOSSUS' LITTLE SISTER-- BUT SHE'S A TEENAGER! THE ILLYANA I REMEMBER WAS KILLED WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER, WHEN THE ARMY DESTROYED THE MANSION. THAT WON'T HAPPEN FOR YEARS YET-- HOW CAN ILLYANA BE THE SAME AGE NOW AS SHE WAS THE DAY I SAW HER *DIE?!!*

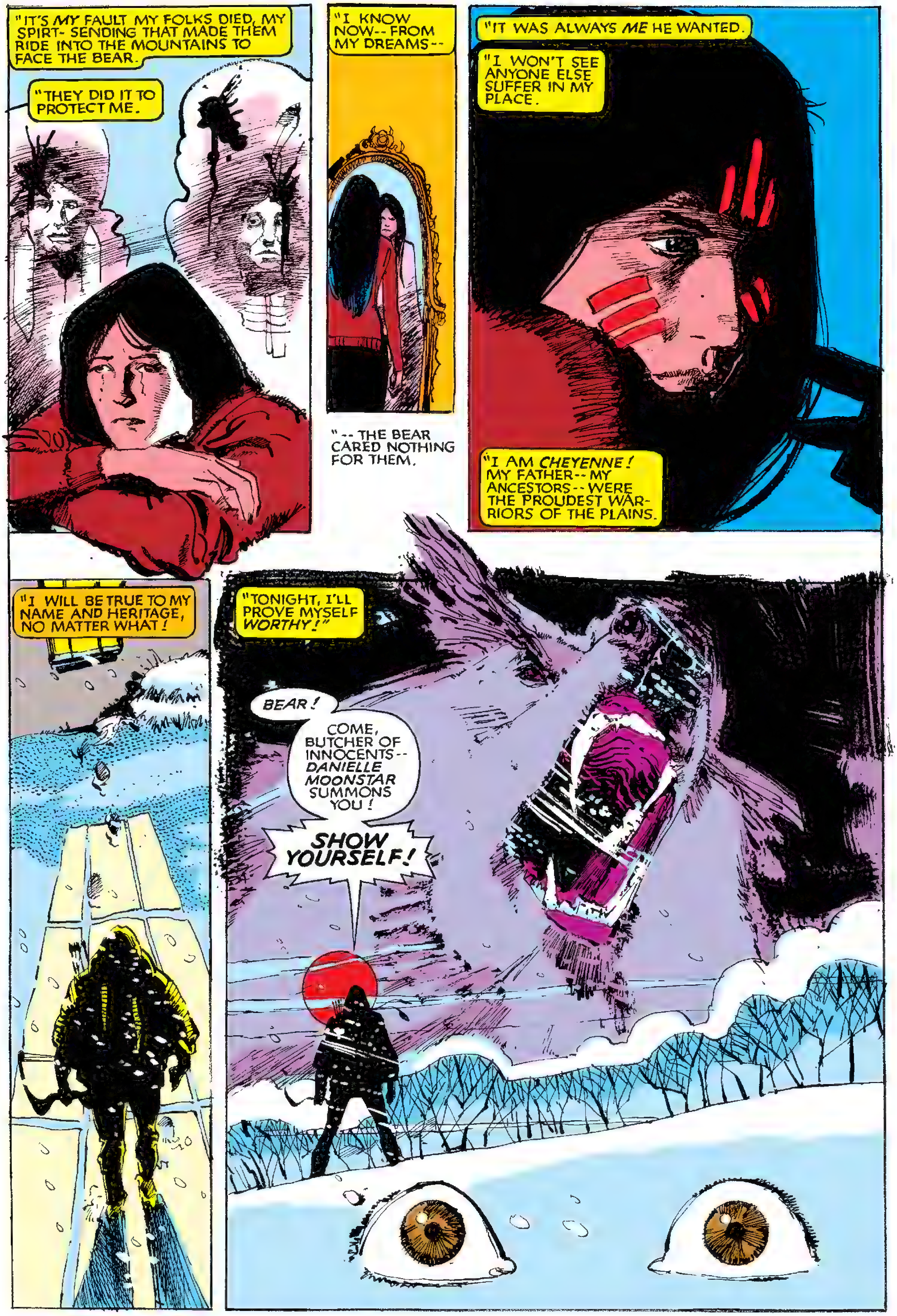

INTERLUDE...
... A STAR, FAR FROM OUR OWN.
A PLANET, ONE OF TWELVE, SIMILAR IN SIZE TO EARTH BUT DEVOID OF LIFE-- LITTLE MORE, REALLY, THAN A GIANT ROCK.
AND ON ITS SURFACE...
... A BEING.
A STRANGER.
A FUGITIVE.
HOW LONG WAS I INERT?!
THE GROUND-- COLD TO THE TOUCH-- I BURNED IT WHITE-HOT WHEN I LANDED!
I FEEL SO WEAK-- MY ENERGY CELLS ARE DANGEROUSLY DEPLETED. BUT THIS WORLD CAN RESTORE ME-- THAT'S WHY I CHOSE IT--
--PROVIDED I HAVE...
...TIME--
--THE SUN!

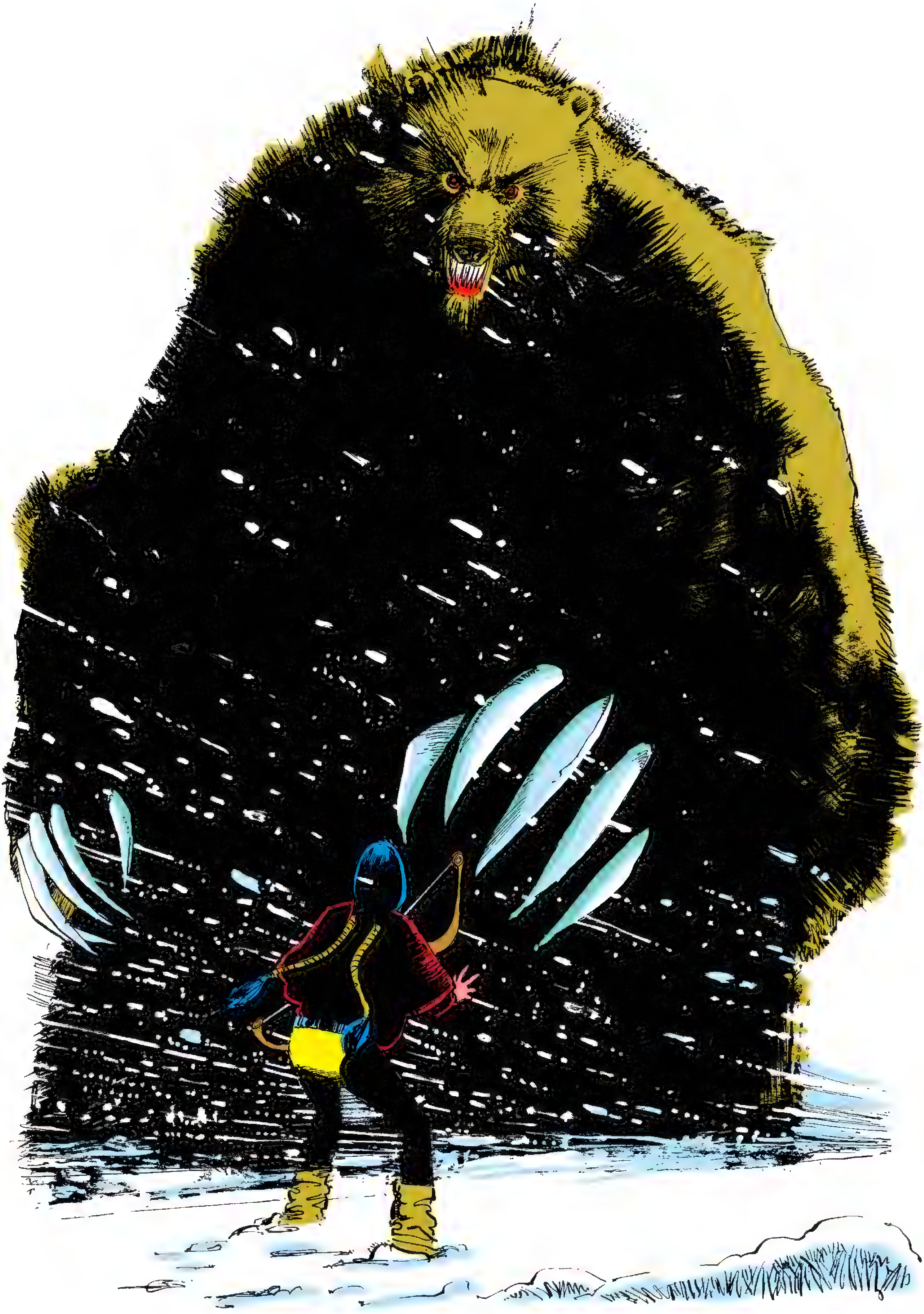

HE'S FOUND ME!
GREETINGS, MY SON!
YOUR FATHER BRINGS YOU THE BLESSINGS...
...OF A QUICK AND PAINLESS...
...END!
NO!

FOR ALL ITS SIZE...
...THE PLANET IS NOTHING COMPARED TO HALF THE MASS AND SUBSTANCE OF ITS SUN. IN A TWINKLING, IT IS CONSUMED.
BUT NOT SO, ITS VISITOR.
THE GAME CONTINUES.
EXCELLENT.
RUN WHERE YOU WILL, WARLOCK. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME.
IN THE END, YOU MUST FACE ME. YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.
AND THEN, I, WHO GAVE YOU LIFE, WILL *TAKE IT!*
"IT'S A BITTER WIND...
"...BUT MY UNIFORM'S SO WELL-INSULATED, I BARELY NOTICE. I COULD USE A MASK, THOUGH. MY FACE'S NEARLY FROZEN.
"VISIBILITY STINKS. WORSE, THIS RIDGE IS THICK WITH ROCKS AND TREES-- IT'S A PERFECT SPOT FOR AN AMBUSH.
"WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT I WANT."

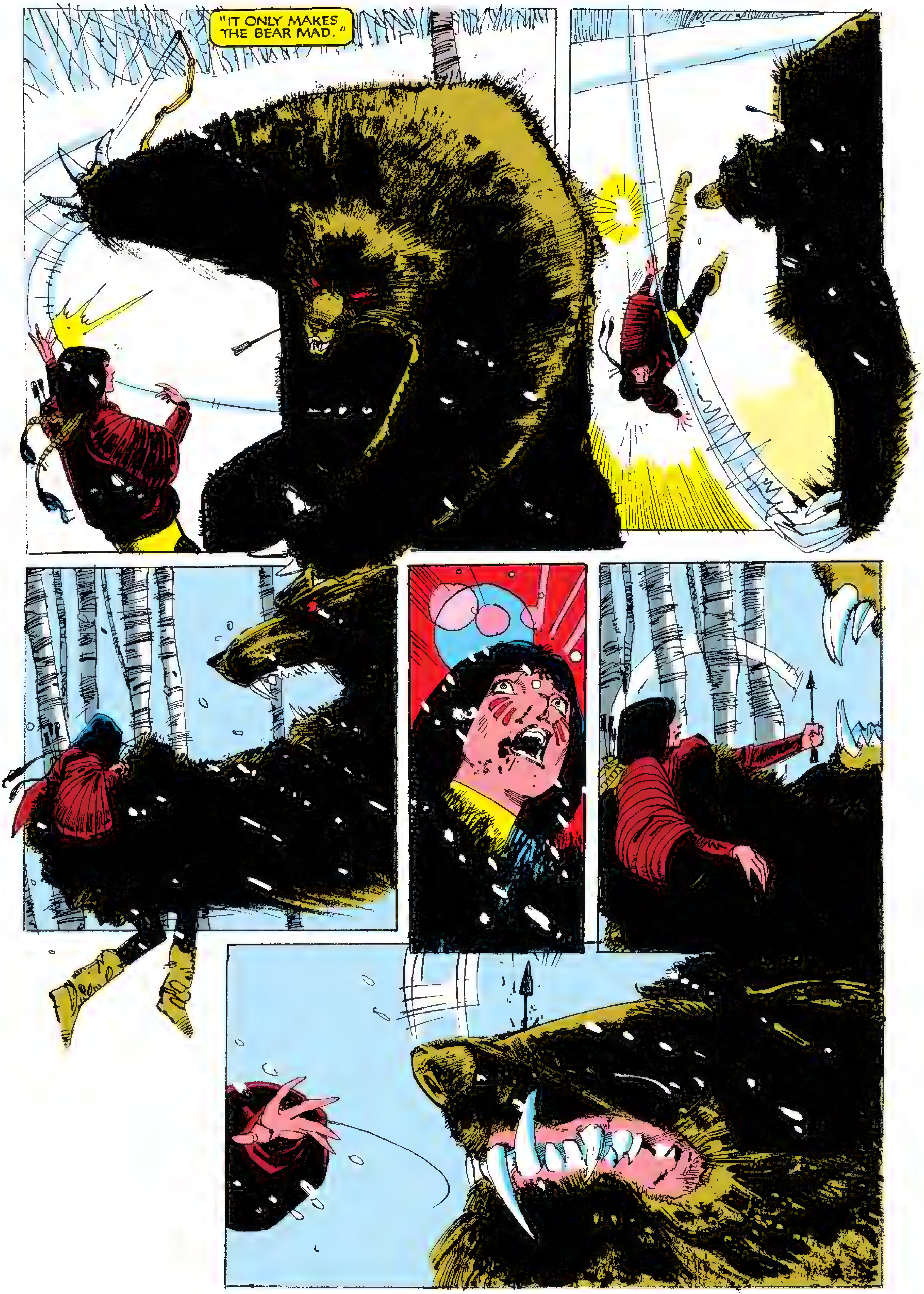

"I GET MY WISH.
RRRAR!
THUK
ONLY ONE ARROW LEFT-- *EH?!*
"FRIGHT..
"...GIVES ME IMPOSSIBLE SPEED.
"THE BEAR MISSES. I DON'T.
ENOUGH, ILLYANA.
KLIK!
ABOUT TIME. YOU LOOK AWFUL.
YOU SHOULD SEE THE OTHER GUY.
THOSE WERE ROBOTS AND ILLUSIONS -- GENERATED BY THE DANGER ROOM -- A FLICK OF A SWITCH AND THEY'LL BE GOOD AS NEW. CAN YOU SAY THE SAME ?!
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
YOU'VE BEEN AT THIS FOR DAYS, DANI, EACH TEST HARDER AND MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE ONE BEFORE. WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO PROVE ?!

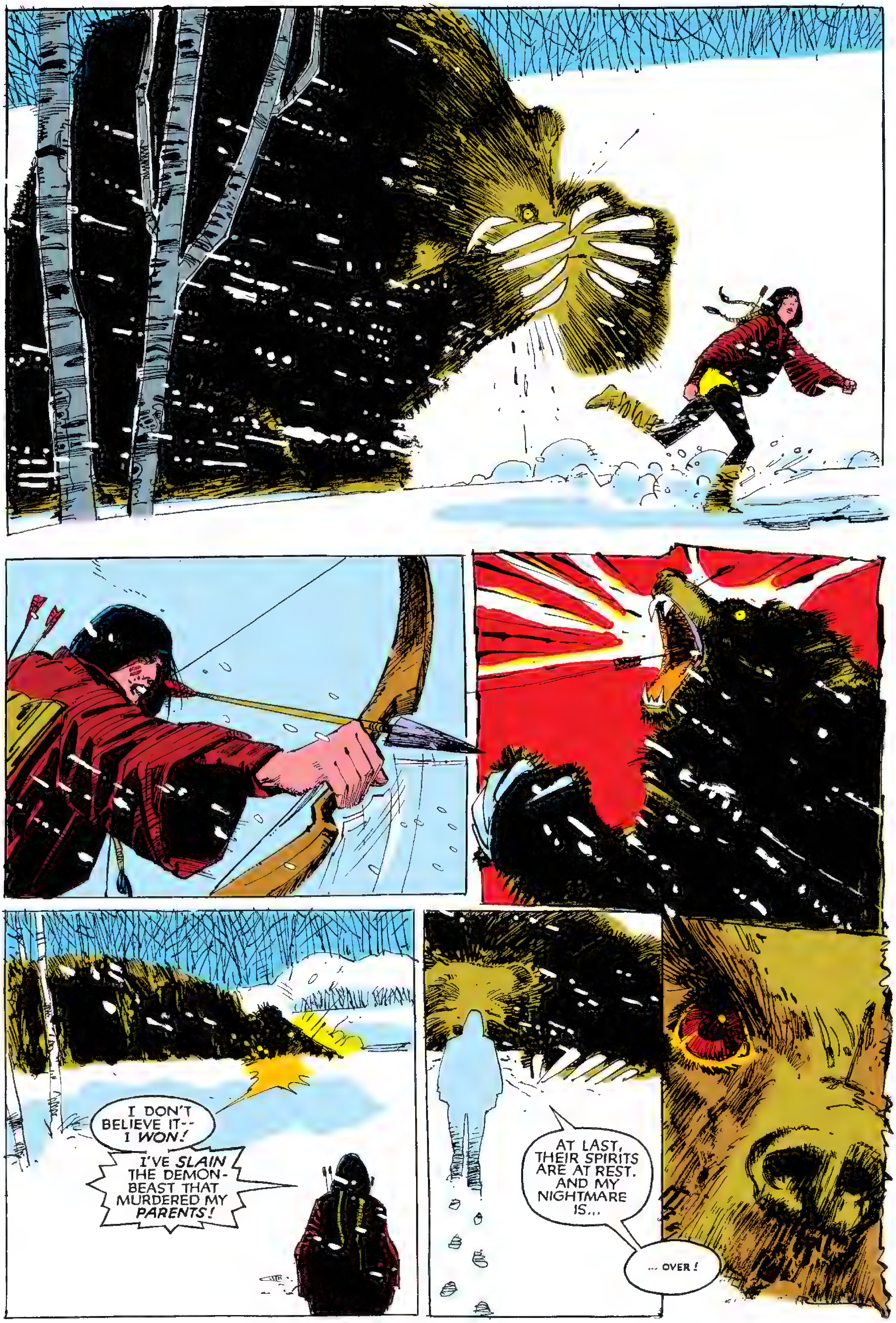

NOT A THING. I'M JUST MAKING SURE THAT--
--THE NEXT TIME WE TANGLE WITH A FOE MY POWERS CAN'T AFFECT-- I'LL STILL BE ABLE TO PULL MY OWN WEIGHT. I CAN'T AFFORD TO LET YOU GUYS DOWN-- ESPECIALLY IF I'M TEAM LEADER.
MAKES SENSE-- BUT BEARS?
GOTTA START SOMEWHERE.
NEXT SESSION, WE'LL MOVE ON TO SOMETHING HARDER.
I'M *BEAT!* IS THERE TIME FOR ME TO SHOWER AND CHANGE BEFORE DINNER?
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
"ILLYANA DIDN'T BELIEVE A WORD I SAID...
"... AND DIDN'T BOTHER HIDING HER ANGER, EITHER. SHE TRUSTED ME WITH HER SECRETS -- THINGS SHE HASN'T TOLD THE X-MEN, OR EVEN HER BEST FRIEND, *KITTY PRYDE* -- IT HURTS THAT I WON'T DO THE SAME.
"SHE'D HELP IF I ASKED. THEY ALL WOULD.
"THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO *ALONE*.

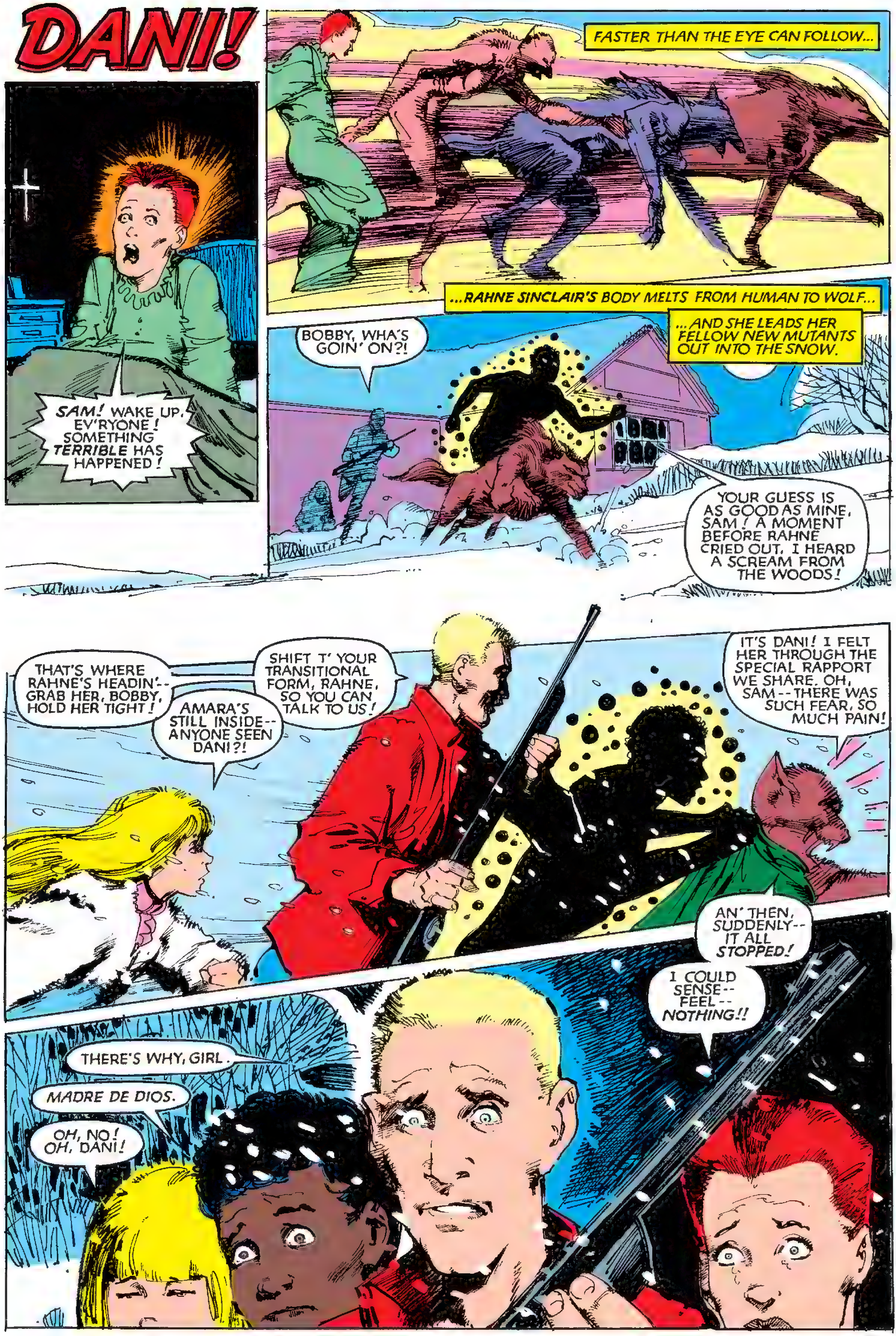

"IT'S *MY* FAULT MY FOLKS DIED, MY SPIRT-SENDING THAT MADE THEM RIDE INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO FACE THE BEAR.
"THEY DID IT TO PROTECT ME.
"I KNOW NOW-- FROM MY DREAMS--
"-- THE BEAR CARED NOTHING FOR THEM.
"IT WAS ALWAYS *ME* HE WANTED.
"I WON'T SEE ANYONE ELSE SUFFER IN MY PLACE.
"I AM *CHEYENNE!* MY FATHER-- MY ANCESTORS-- WERE THE PROUDEST WARRIORS OF THE PLAINS.
"I WILL BE TRUE TO MY NAME AND HERITAGE, NO MATTER WHAT!
"TONIGHT, I'LL PROVE MYSELF *WORTHY!*"
*BEAR!*
COME, BUTCHER OF INNOCENTS-- *DANIELLE MOONSTAR* SUMMONS YOU!
*SHOW YOURSELF!*

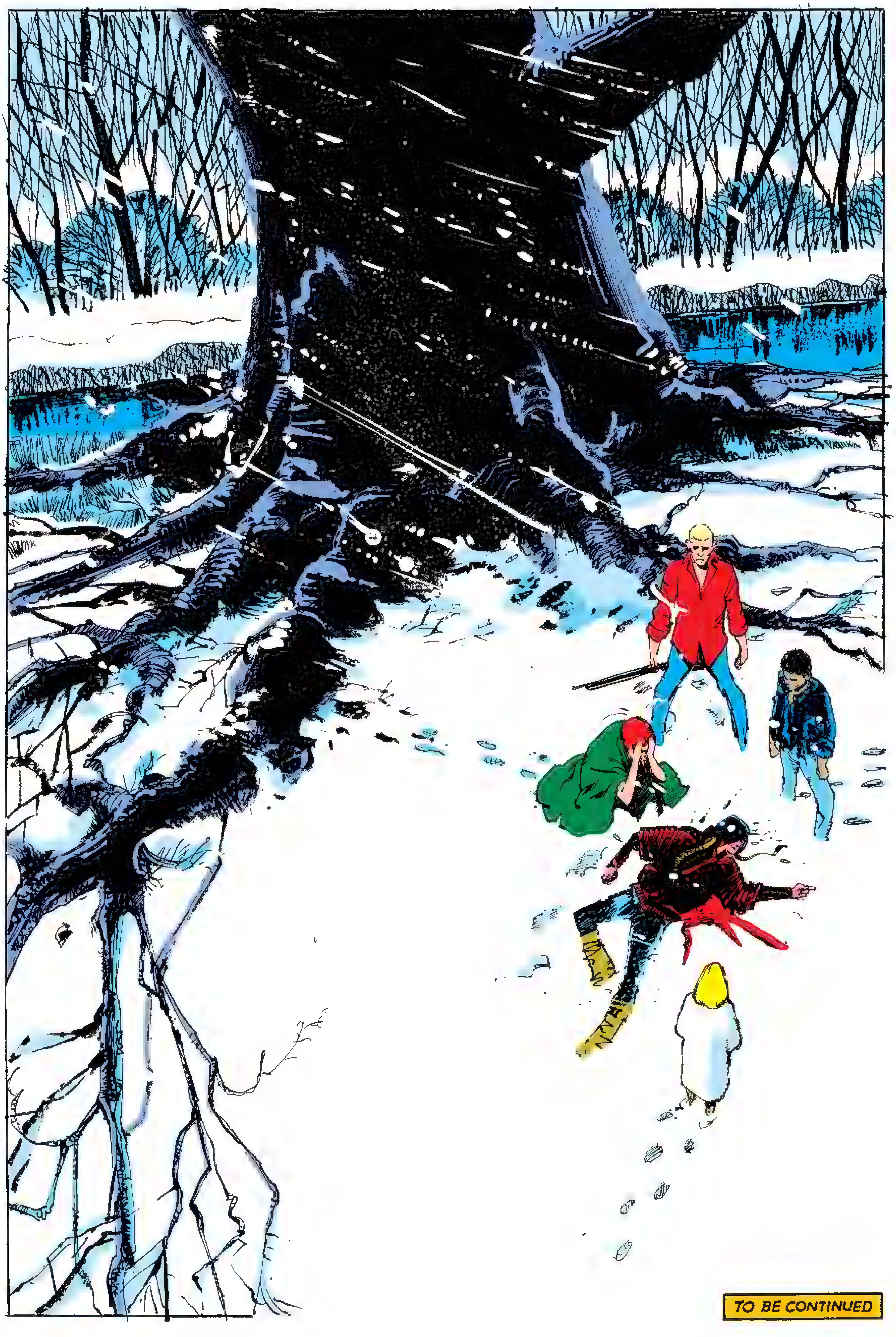


"TO FIND OUT THE MONSTER'S WEAKNESS...
"... AND THROW HIM OFF-BALANCE, I REACH INTO THE PIT OF HIS SOUL...
"... FOR AN IMAGE -- A *SPIRIT-FORM*, REAL AS LIFE -- OF WHAT IT FEARS MOST.
ME?!?
"MY FIRST ARROW IS A KILLING SHOT.


"IT ONLY MAKES THE BEAR MAD."


I DON'T BELIEVE IT-- I *WON!*
I'VE *SLAIN* THE DEMON-BEAST THAT MURDERED MY *PARENTS!*
AT LAST, THEIR SPIRITS ARE AT REST. AND MY NIGHTMARE IS...
... OVER!


DANI!
SAM! WAKE UP, EV'RYONE! SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!
FASTER THAN THE EYE CAN FOLLOW...
...RAHNE SINCLAIR'S BODY MELTS FROM HUMAN TO WOLF...
...AND SHE LEADS HER FELLOW NEW MUTANTS OUT INTO THE SNOW.
BOBBY, WHA'S GOIN' ON?!
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, SAM! A MOMENT BEFORE RAHNE CRIED OUT, I HEARD A SCREAM FROM THE WOODS!
THAT'S WHERE RAHNE'S HEADIN'-- GRAB HER, BOBBY, HOLD HER TIGHT!
SHIFT T' YOUR TRANSITIONAL FORM, RAHNE, SO YOU CAN TALK TO US!
AMARA'S STILL INSIDE-- ANYONE SEEN DANI?!
IT'S DANI! I FELT HER THROUGH THE SPECIAL RAPPORT WE SHARE. OH, SAM -- THERE WAS SUCH FEAR, SO MUCH PAIN!
AN' THEN, SUDDENLY-- IT ALL STOPPED!
I COULD SENSE-- FEEL-- NOTHING!!
THERE'S WHY, GIRL.
MADRE DE DIOS.
OH, NO! OH, DANI!



TO BE CONTINUED

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THE NEW MUTANTS™
Bill Sienkiewicz

STAN LEE PRESENTS
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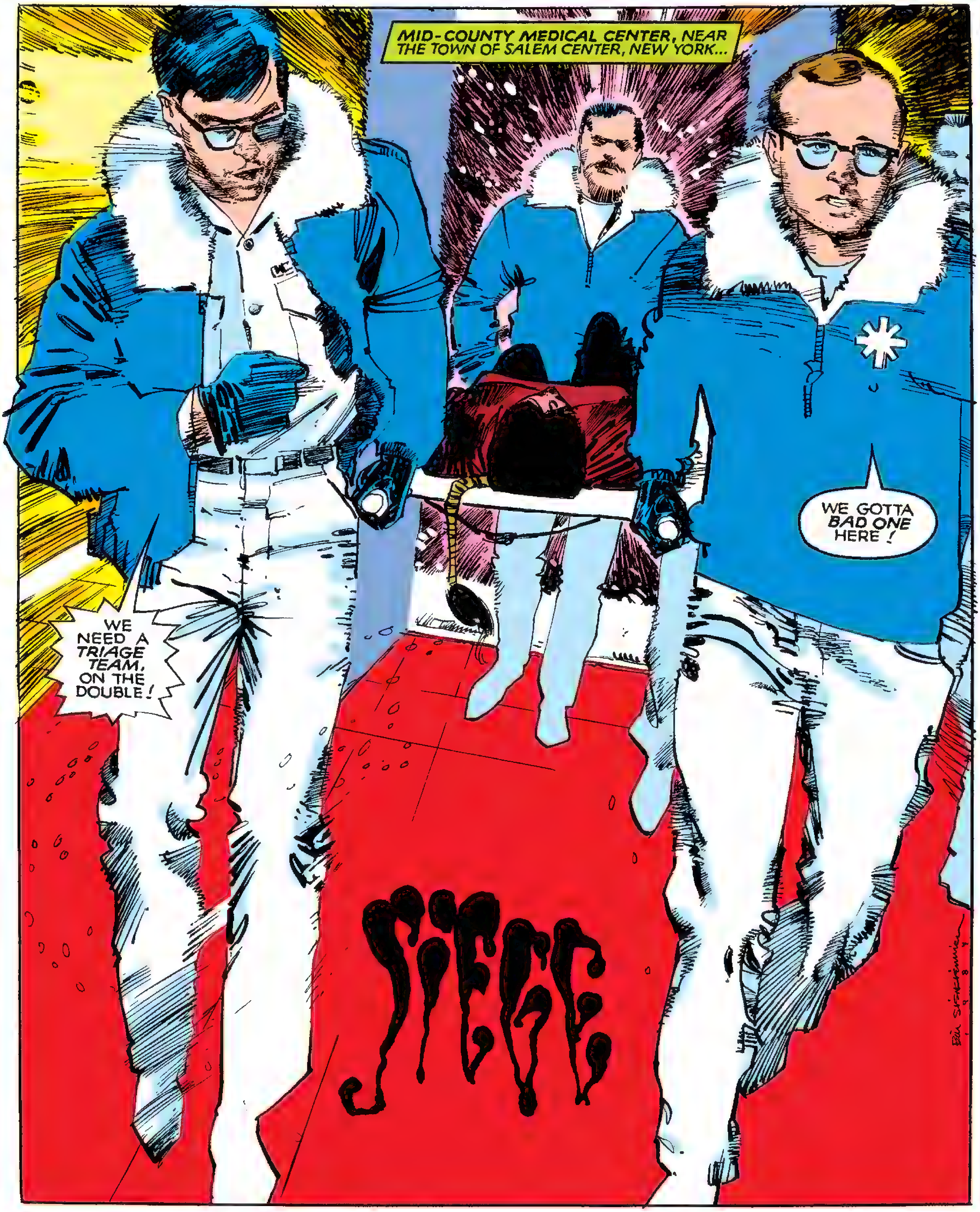
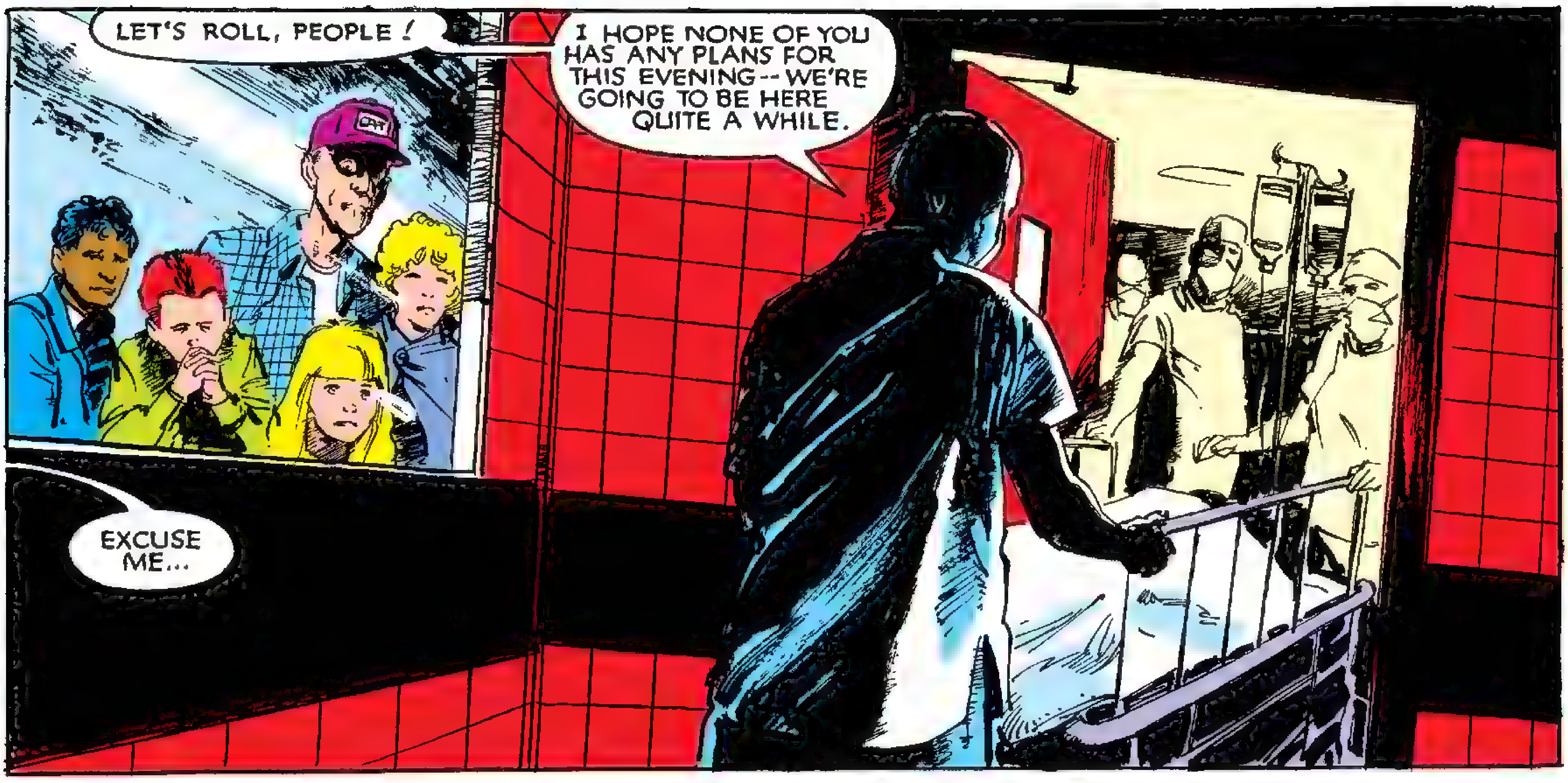
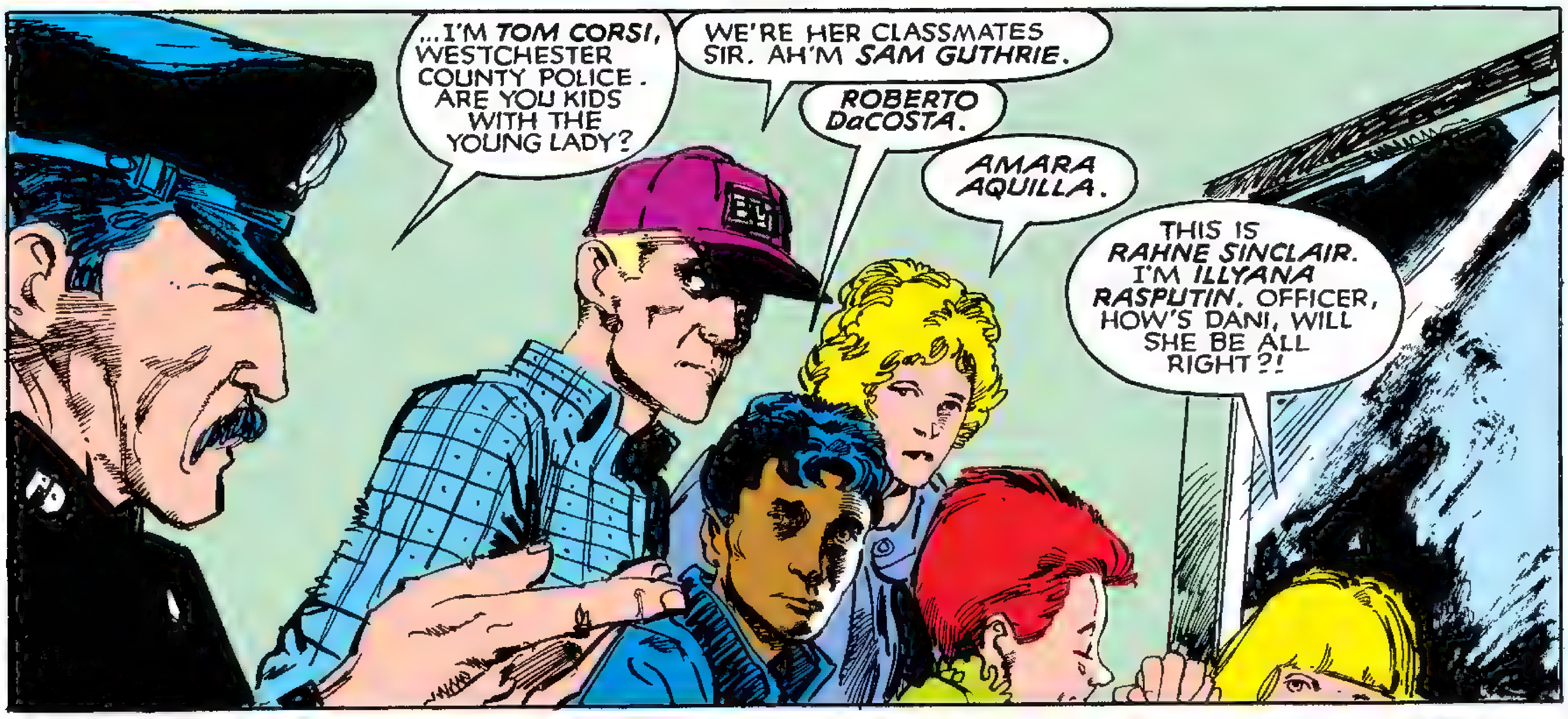
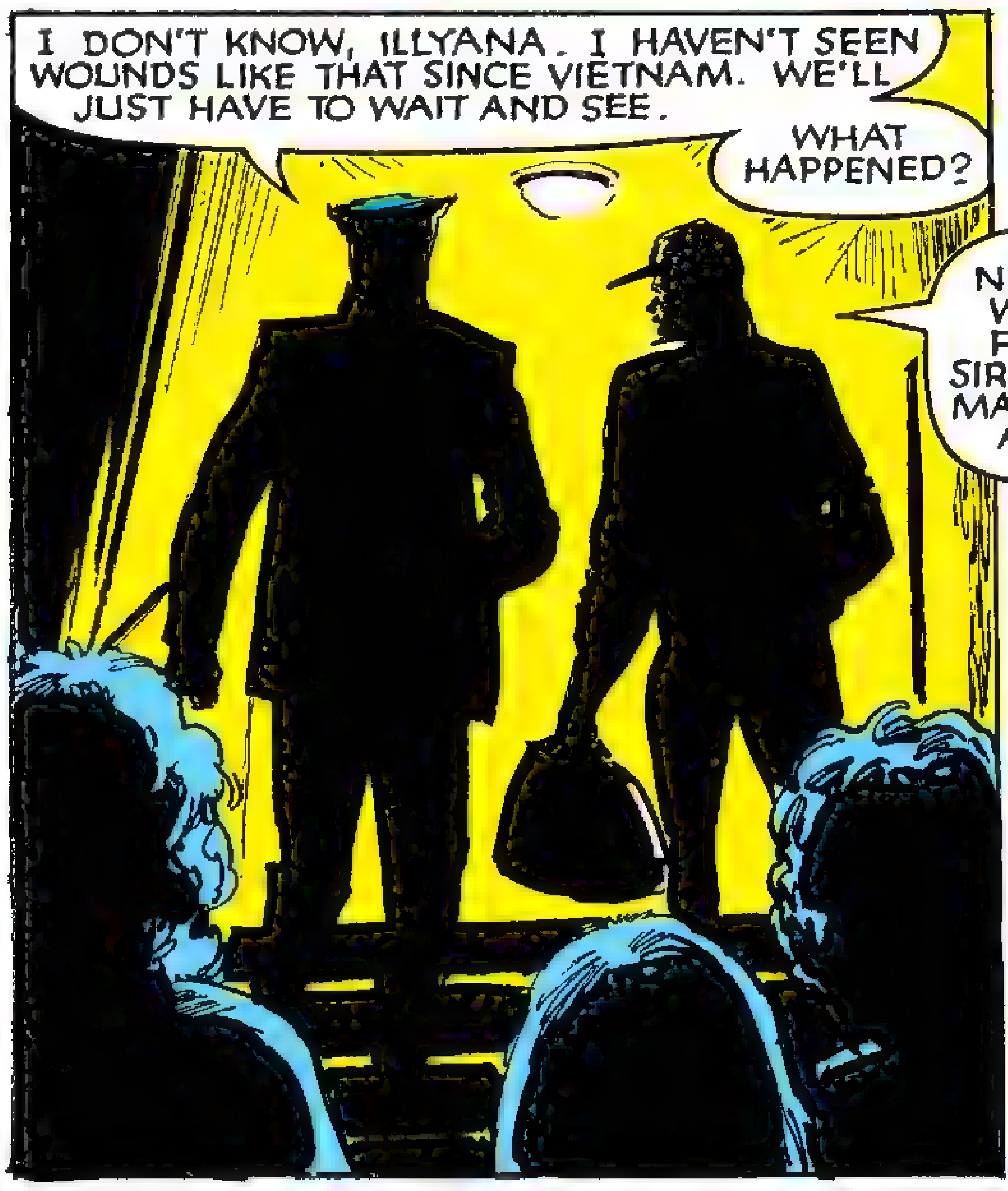
JIM SHOOTER CHIEF
NEW MUTANTS STARS
CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

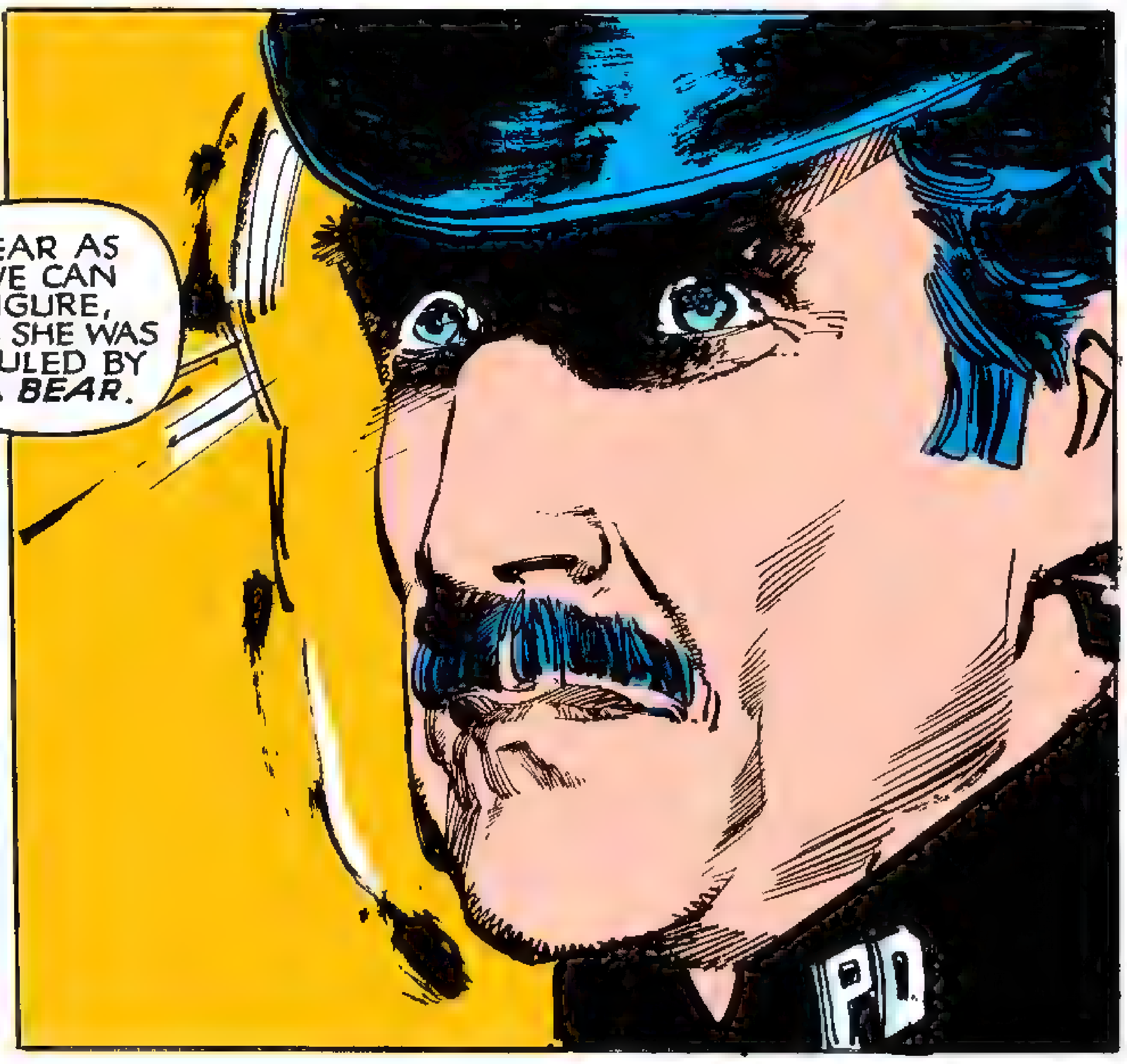

MID-COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER, NEAR THE TOWN OF SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK...
WE GOTTA *BAD ONE* HERE!
WE NEED A *TRIAGE TEAM*, ON THE DOUBLE!
SIEGE

WHO IS SHE?!
*DANIELLE MOONSTAR*-- A STUDENT OVER AT XAVIER'S SCHOOL.
TYPE HER AND CROSS-MATCH! WE'LL NEED SIX UNITS, WHOLE BLOOD, TO START AND PROBABLY A WHOLE LOT MORE.
BETTER PUT OUT A CALL FOR DONORS AS WELL.
I'M BARELY GETTING A PULSE.
VISIBLE COMPOUND FRACTURES-- FEMUR AND FIBULA...
...MULTIPLE LACERATIONS, TORSO AND EXTREMITIES...
...POSSIBLE ABDOMINAL TRAUMA...
...CRUSHED AND SUBLUXED VERTEBRAE...
...SKULL TRAUMA, POSSIBLE CONCUSSION...
...PROBABLE FLAIL CHEST...
PREP THE O-R, STAT!
I WANT HER IN SURGERY, AS FAST AS POSSIBLE!
IT'S A MIRACLE SHE LASTED THIS LONG. SHE'S ONE TOUGH KID.
WHAT'S THIS ON HER FACE, *WAR PAINT*?!
WHAT ABOUT X-RAYS?!
NO TIME!

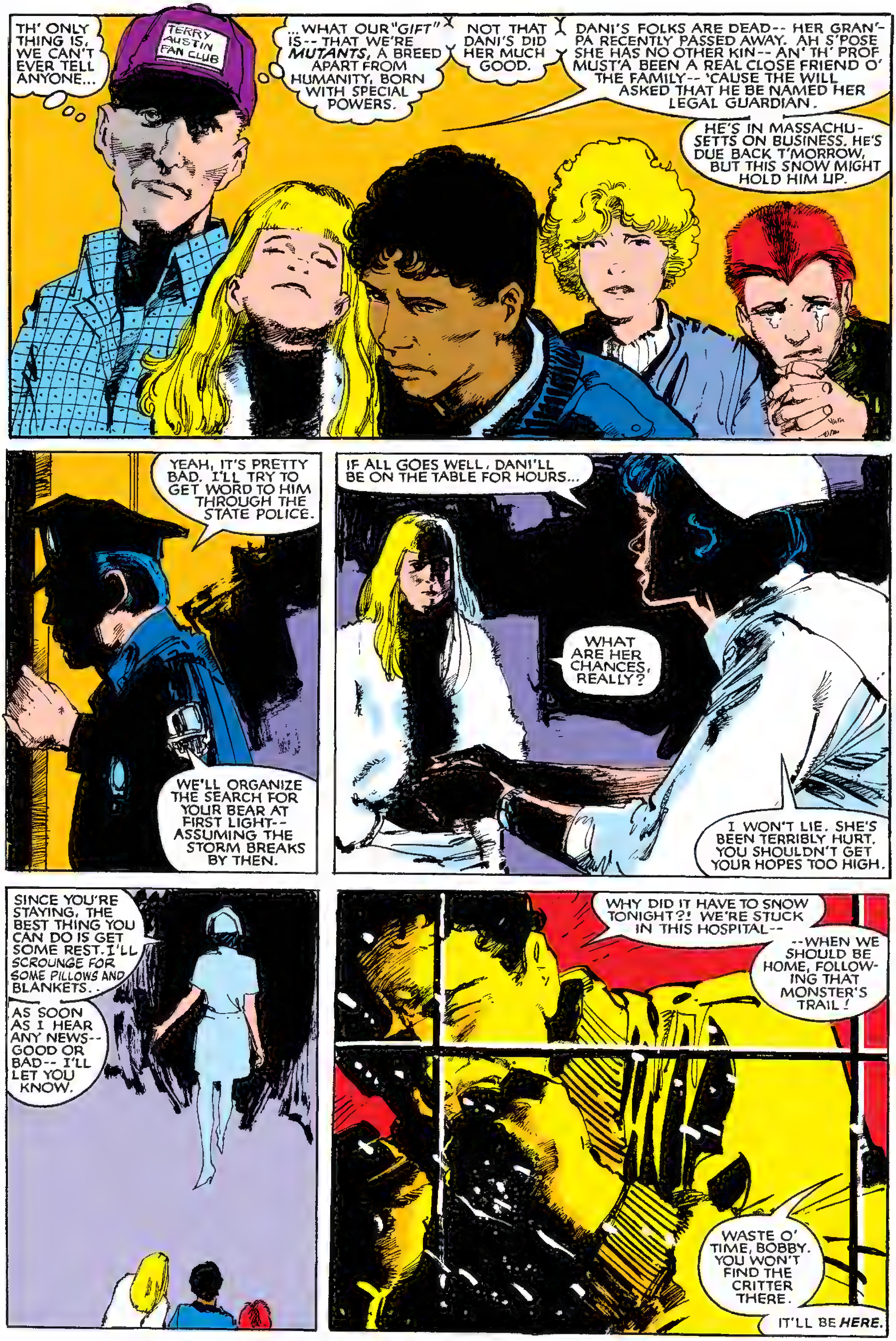

LET'S ROLL, PEOPLE!
I HOPE NONE OF YOU HAS ANY PLANS FOR THIS EVENING -- WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE QUITE A WHILE.
EXCUSE ME...

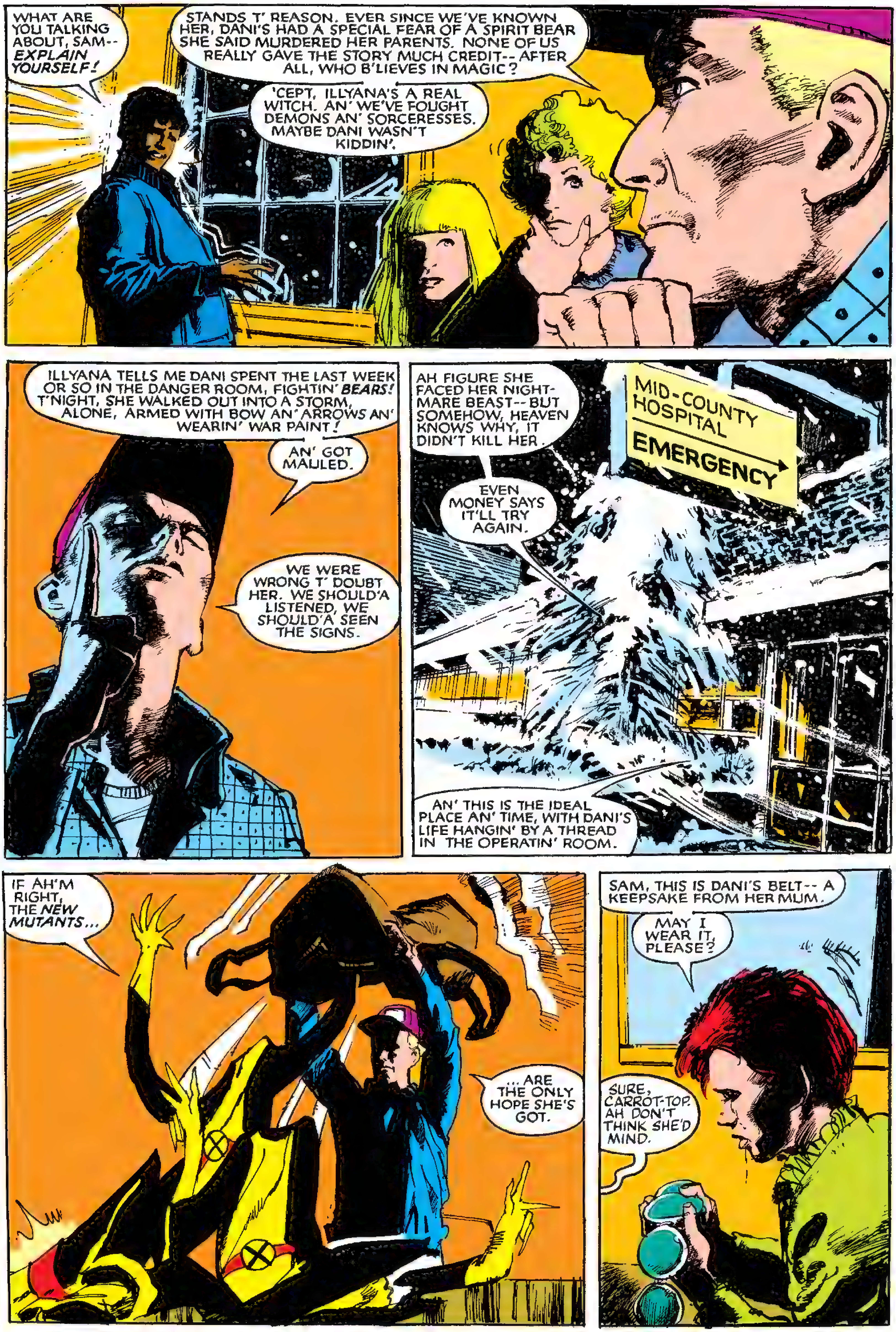

...I'M TOM CORSI, WESTCHESTER COUNTY POLICE. ARE YOU KIDS WITH THE YOUNG LADY?
WE'RE HER CLASSMATES SIR. AH'M SAM GUTHRIE.
ROBERTO DaCOSTA.
AMARA AQUILLA.
THIS IS RAHNE SINCLAIR. I'M ILLYANA RASPUTIN. OFFICER, HOW'S DANI, WILL SHE BE ALL RIGHT?!

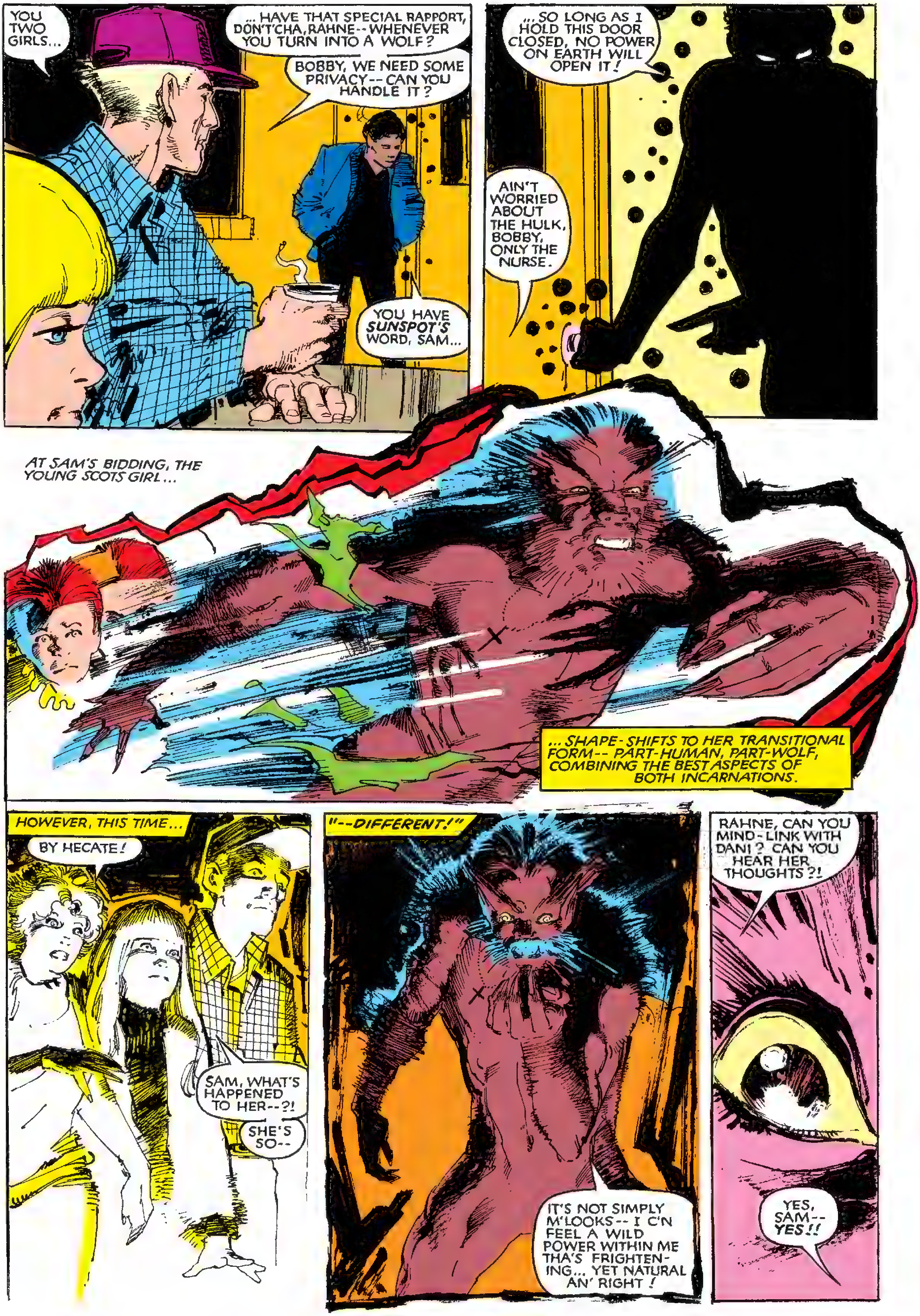

I DON'T KNOW, ILLYANA. I HAVEN'T SEEN WOUNDS LIKE THAT SINCE VIETNAM. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.
WHAT HAPPENED?
NEAR AS WE CAN FIGURE, SIR, SHE WAS MAULED BY A BEAR.

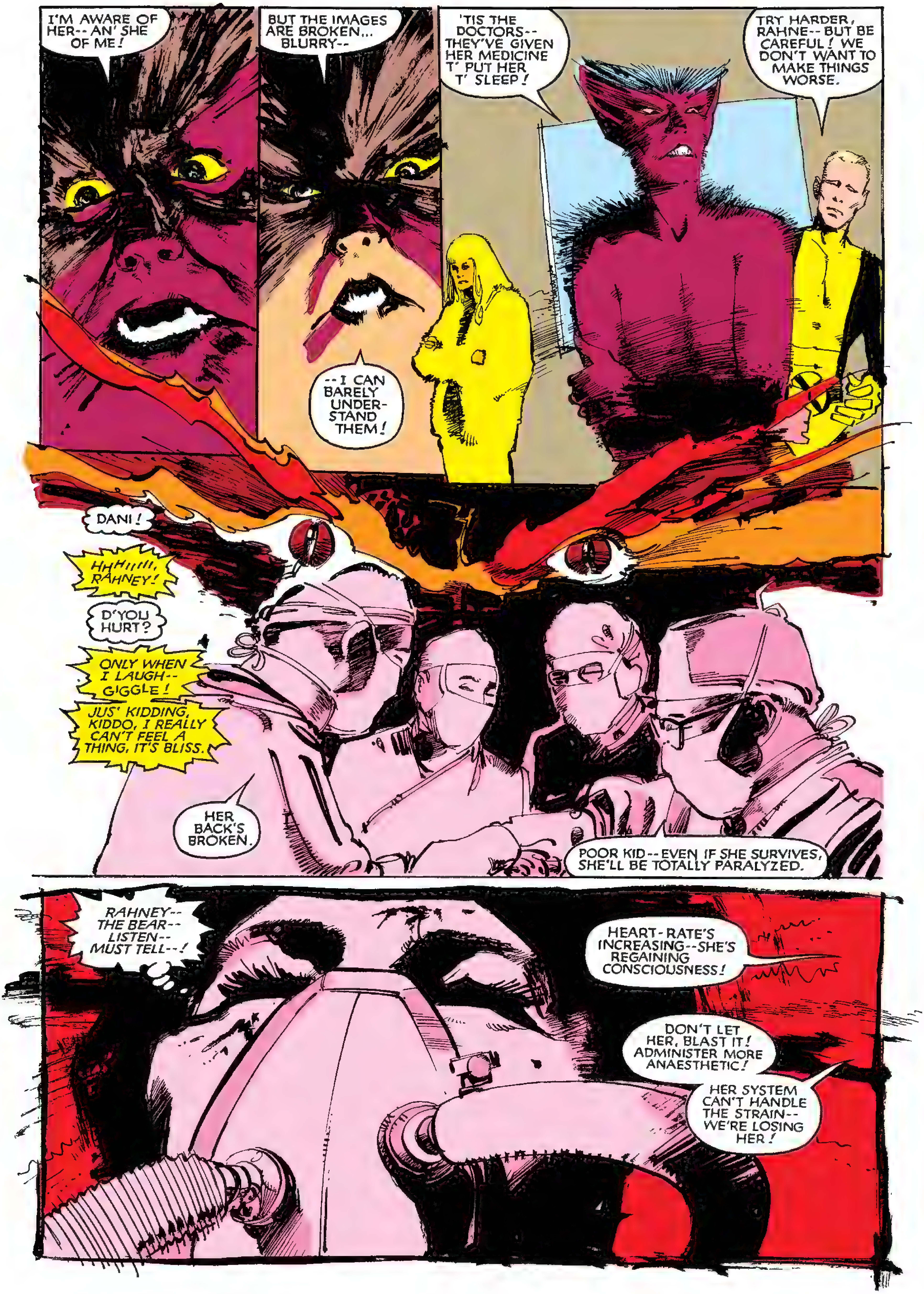


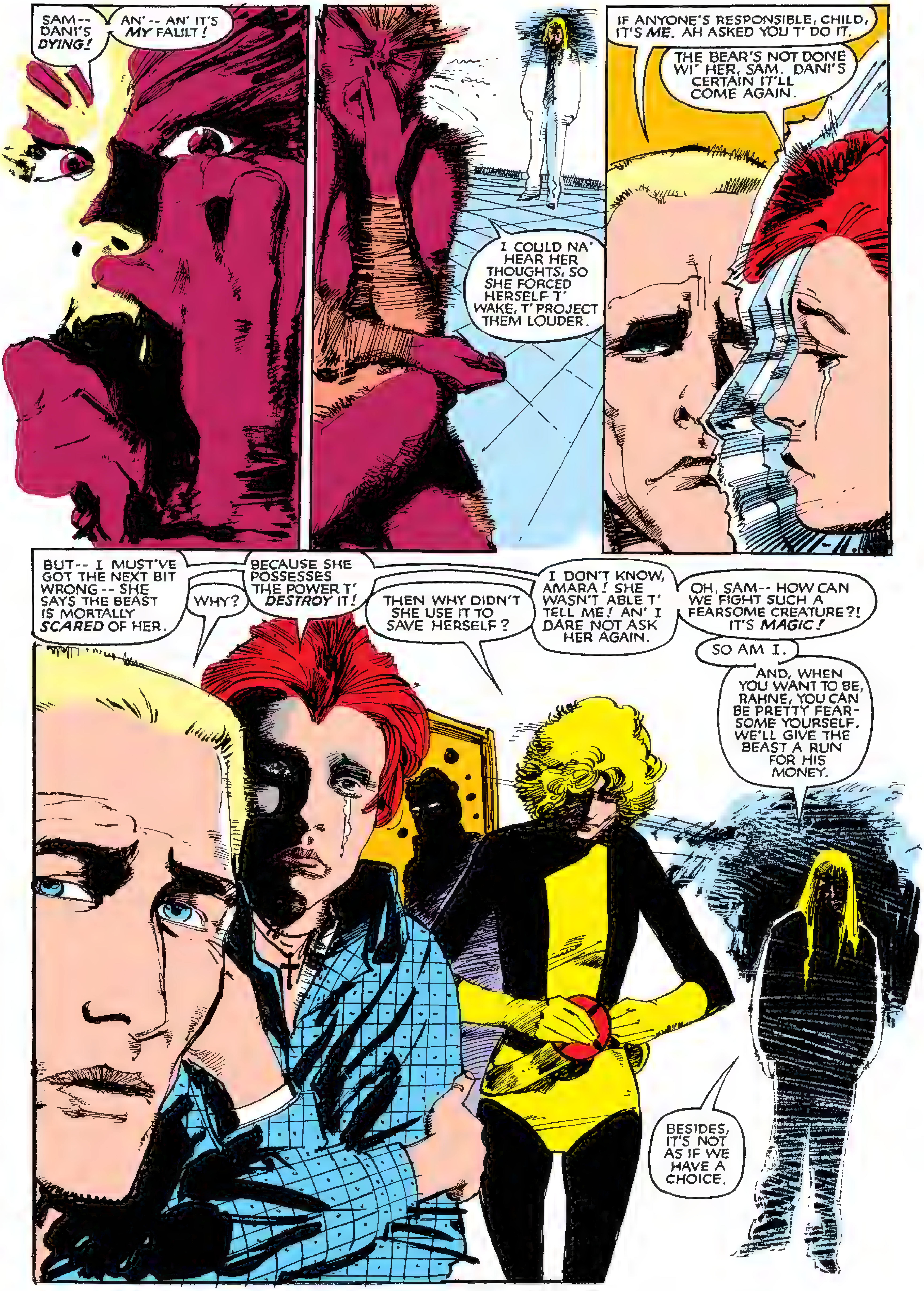
IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY?! YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
OF COURSE, *SENHOR*. THIS IS ONE GREAT, ELABORATE PRACTICAL JOKE.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY.
CANDY
THEN *DO* SOMETHING -- BESIDES STANDING AROUND HERE BABBLING LIKE AN *IDIOT!*
ROBERTO! IT ISN'T THE OFFICER'S FAULT.
HE'S DOING HIS BEST TO HELP!
I'LL GO, SON -- AS SOON AS I GET ALL THE FACTS.
I HEARD YELLING, WHAT'S GOING ON?!
SORRY, MA'AM. WE'RE A BIT ON EDGE.
AH GUESS SOME OF US HAD T' LET OFF STEAM.
I UNDERSTAND -- BUT KEEP IT DOWN, OKAY? YOUR FRIEND'S HOLDING HER OWN -- SHE'S A REAL FIGHTER, THAT'S A GOOD SIGN.
DEAR LORD, LET DANI BE WELL. LET HER LIVE!
YOU KIDS ATTEND XAVIER'S, RIGHT?
*UH-HUH* -- THAT'S RIGHT, MR. CORSI -- PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.

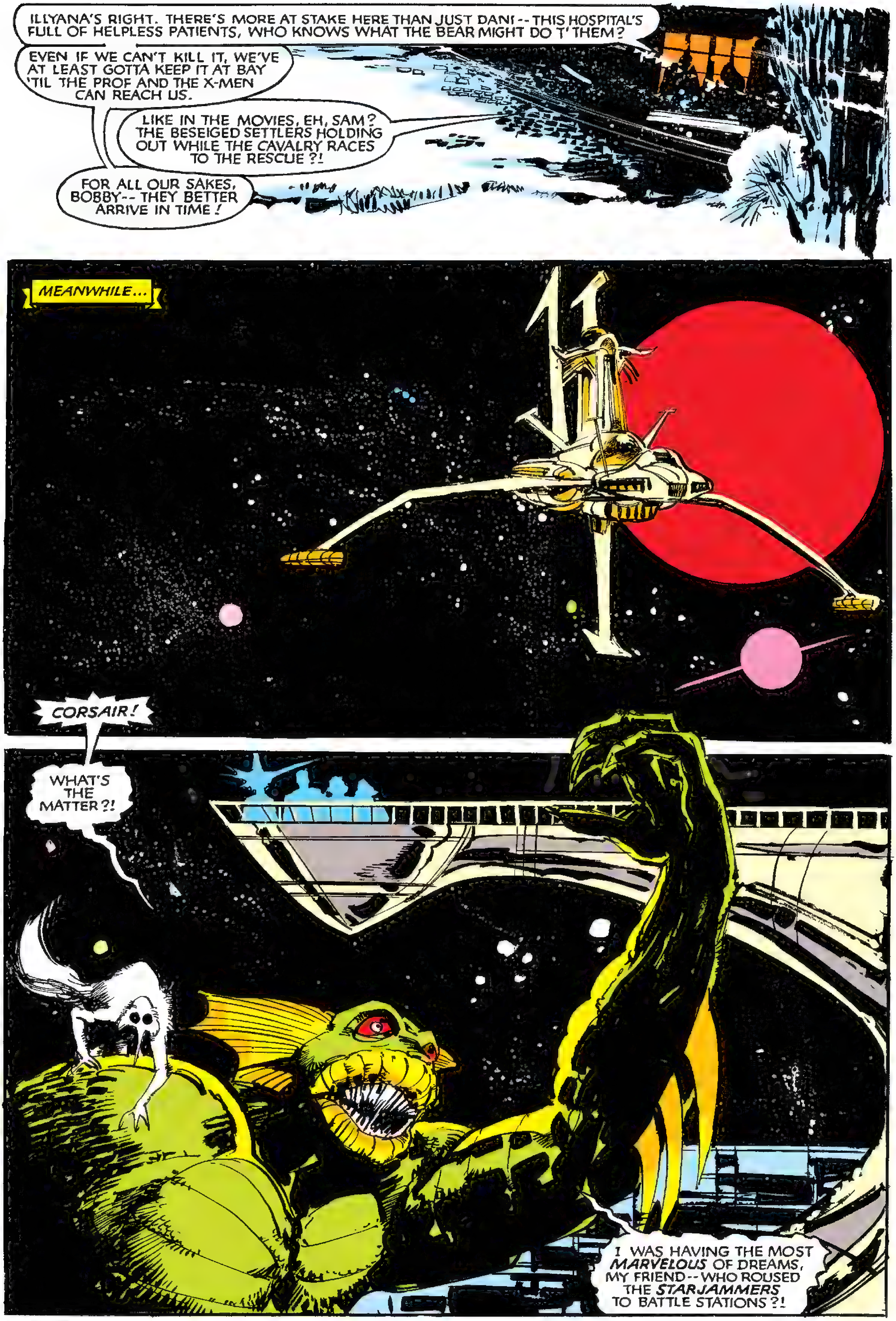

TERRY AUSTIN FAN CLUB
TH' ONLY THING IS, WE CAN'T EVER TELL ANYONE...
...WHAT OUR "GIFT" IS-- THAT WE'RE MUTANTS, A BREED APART FROM HUMANITY, BORN WITH SPECIAL POWERS.
NOT THAT DANI'S DID HER MUCH GOOD.
DANI'S FOLKS ARE DEAD-- HER GRAN'PA RECENTLY PASSED AWAY. AH S'POSE SHE HAS NO OTHER KIN-- AN' TH' PROF MUST'A BEEN A REAL CLOSE FRIEND O' THE FAMILY-- 'CAUSE THE WILL ASKED THAT HE BE NAMED HER LEGAL GUARDIAN.
HE'S IN MASSACHUSETTS ON BUSINESS. HE'S DUE BACK T'MORROW, BUT THIS SNOW MIGHT HOLD HIM UP.
YEAH, IT'S PRETTY BAD. I'LL TRY TO GET WORD TO HIM THROUGH THE STATE POLICE.
WE'LL ORGANIZE THE SEARCH FOR YOUR BEAR AT FIRST LIGHT-- ASSUMING THE STORM BREAKS BY THEN.
IF ALL GOES WELL, DANI'LL BE ON THE TABLE FOR HOURS...
WHAT ARE HER CHANCES, REALLY?
I WON'T LIE. SHE'S BEEN TERRIBLY HURT. YOU SHOULDN'T GET YOUR HOPES TOO HIGH.
SINCE YOU'RE STAYING, THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO IS GET SOME REST. I'LL SCROUNGE FOR SOME PILLOWS AND BLANKETS.
AS SOON AS I HEAR ANY NEWS-- GOOD OR BAD-- I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
WHY DID IT HAVE TO SNOW TONIGHT?! WE'RE STUCK IN THIS HOSPITAL--
--WHEN WE SHOULD BE HOME, FOLLOWING THAT MONSTER'S TRAIL!
WASTE O' TIME, BOBBY. YOU WON'T FIND THE CRITTER THERE.
IT'LL BE HERE.

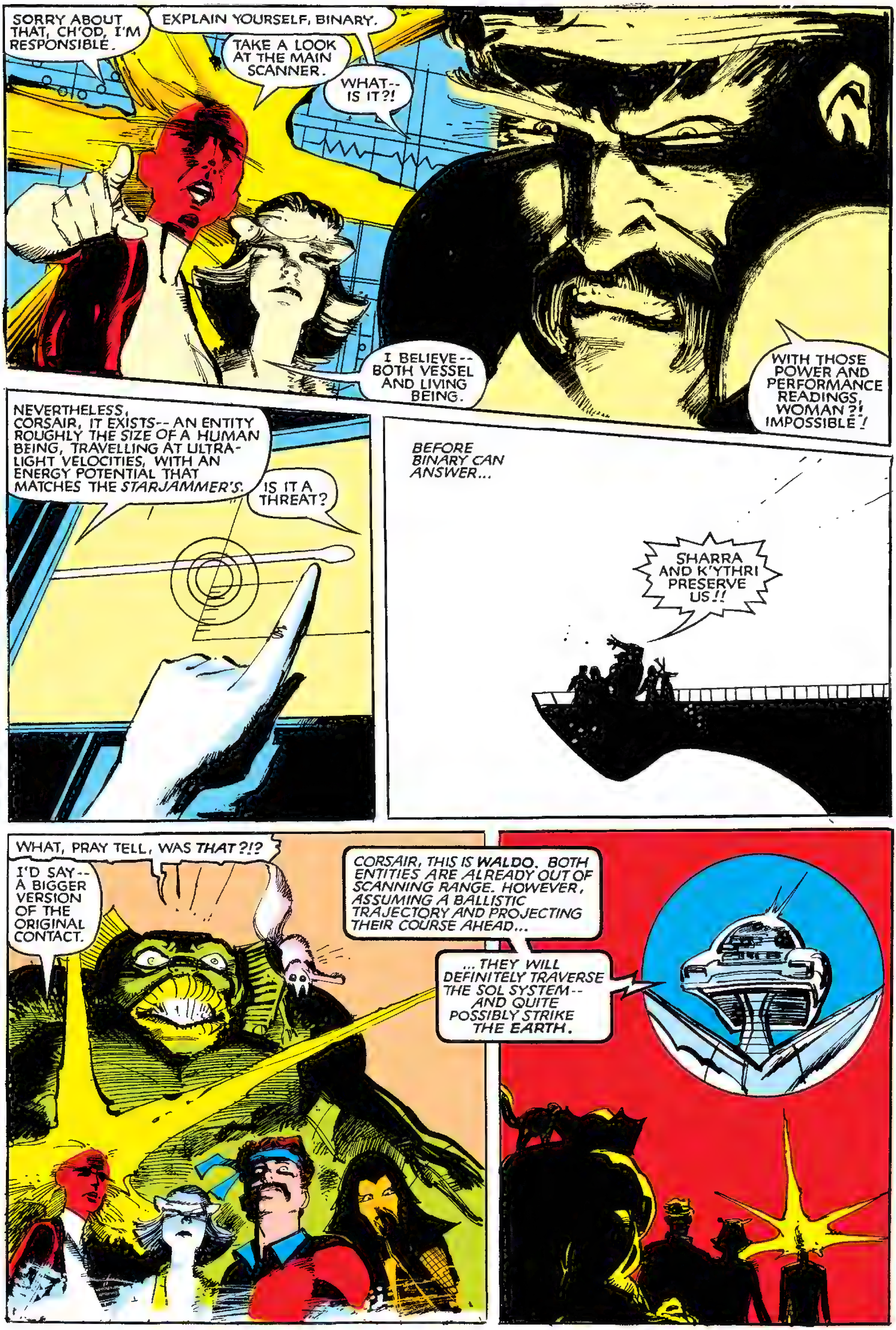

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, SAM-- *EXPLAIN YOURSELF!*
STANDS T' REASON. EVER SINCE WE'VE KNOWN HER, DANI'S HAD A SPECIAL FEAR OF A SPIRIT BEAR SHE SAID MURDERED HER PARENTS. NONE OF US REALLY GAVE THE STORY MUCH CREDIT-- AFTER ALL, WHO B'LIEVES IN MAGIC?
'CEPT, ILLYANA'S A REAL WITCH. AN' WE'VE FOUGHT DEMONS AN' SORCERESSES. MAYBE DANI WASN'T KIDDIN'.
ILLYANA TELLS ME DANI SPENT THE LAST WEEK OR SO IN THE DANGER ROOM, FIGHTIN' *BEARS!* T'NIGHT, SHE WALKED OUT INTO A STORM, ALONE, ARMED WITH BOW AN' ARROWS AN' WEARIN' WAR PAINT!
AN' GOT MAULED.
WE WERE WRONG T' DOUBT HER. WE SHOULD'A LISTENED, WE SHOULD'A SEEN THE SIGNS.
AH FIGURE SHE FACED HER NIGHTMARE BEAST-- BUT SOMEHOW, HEAVEN KNOWS WHY, IT DIDN'T KILL HER.
MID-COUNTY HOSPITAL
EMERGENCY
EVEN MONEY SAYS IT'LL TRY AGAIN.
AN' THIS IS THE IDEAL PLACE AN' TIME, WITH DANI'S LIFE HANGIN' BY A THREAD IN THE OPERATIN' ROOM.
IF AH'M RIGHT, THE *NEW MUTANTS*...
...ARE THE ONLY HOPE SHE'S GOT.
SAM, THIS IS DANI'S BELT-- A KEEPSAKE FROM HER MUM.
MAY I WEAR IT, PLEASE?
SURE, CARROT-TOP. AH DON'T THINK SHE'D MIND.

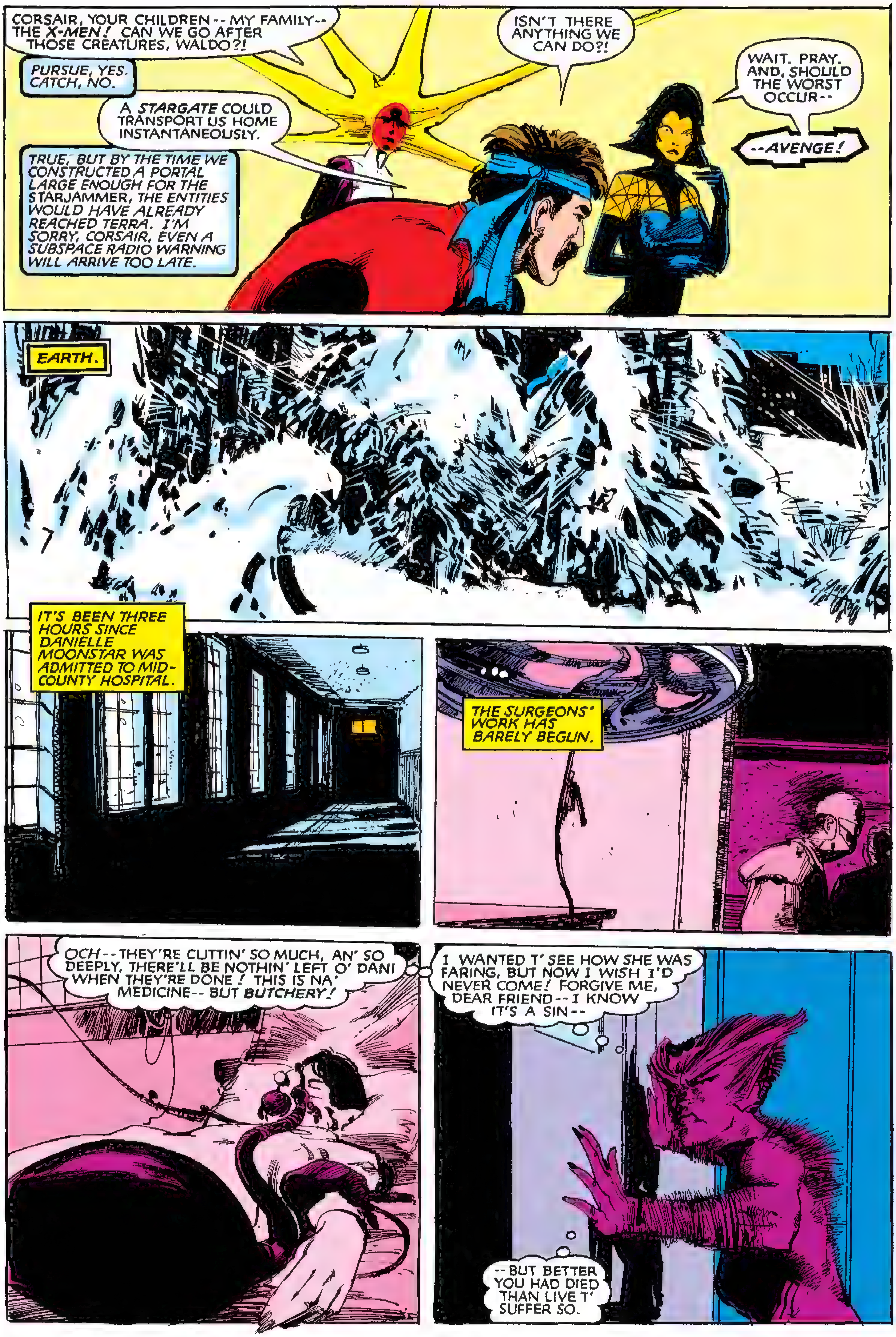

YOU TWO GIRLS...
...HAVE THAT SPECIAL RAPPORT, DON'T'CHA, RAHNE--WHENEVER YOU TURN INTO A WOLF?
BOBBY, WE NEED SOME PRIVACY--CAN YOU HANDLE IT?
YOU HAVE **SUNSPOT'S** WORD, SAM...
...SO LONG AS I HOLD THIS DOOR CLOSED, NO POWER ON EARTH WILL OPEN IT!
AIN'T WORRIED ABOUT THE HULK, BOBBY, ONLY THE NURSE.
*AT SAM'S BIDDING, THE YOUNG SCOTS GIRL...*
*...SHAPE-SHIFTS TO HER TRANSITIONAL FORM--PART-HUMAN, PART-WOLF, COMBINING THE BEST ASPECTS OF BOTH INCARNATIONS.*
*HOWEVER, THIS TIME...*
BY HECATE!
SAM, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HER--?!
SHE'S SO--
*"--DIFFERENT!"*
IT'S NOT SIMPLY M'LOOKS--I C'N FEEL A WILD POWER WITHIN ME THA'S FRIGHTENING... YET NATURAL AN' RIGHT!
RAHNE, CAN YOU MIND-LINK WITH DANI? CAN YOU HEAR HER THOUGHTS?!
YES, SAM--**YES!!**

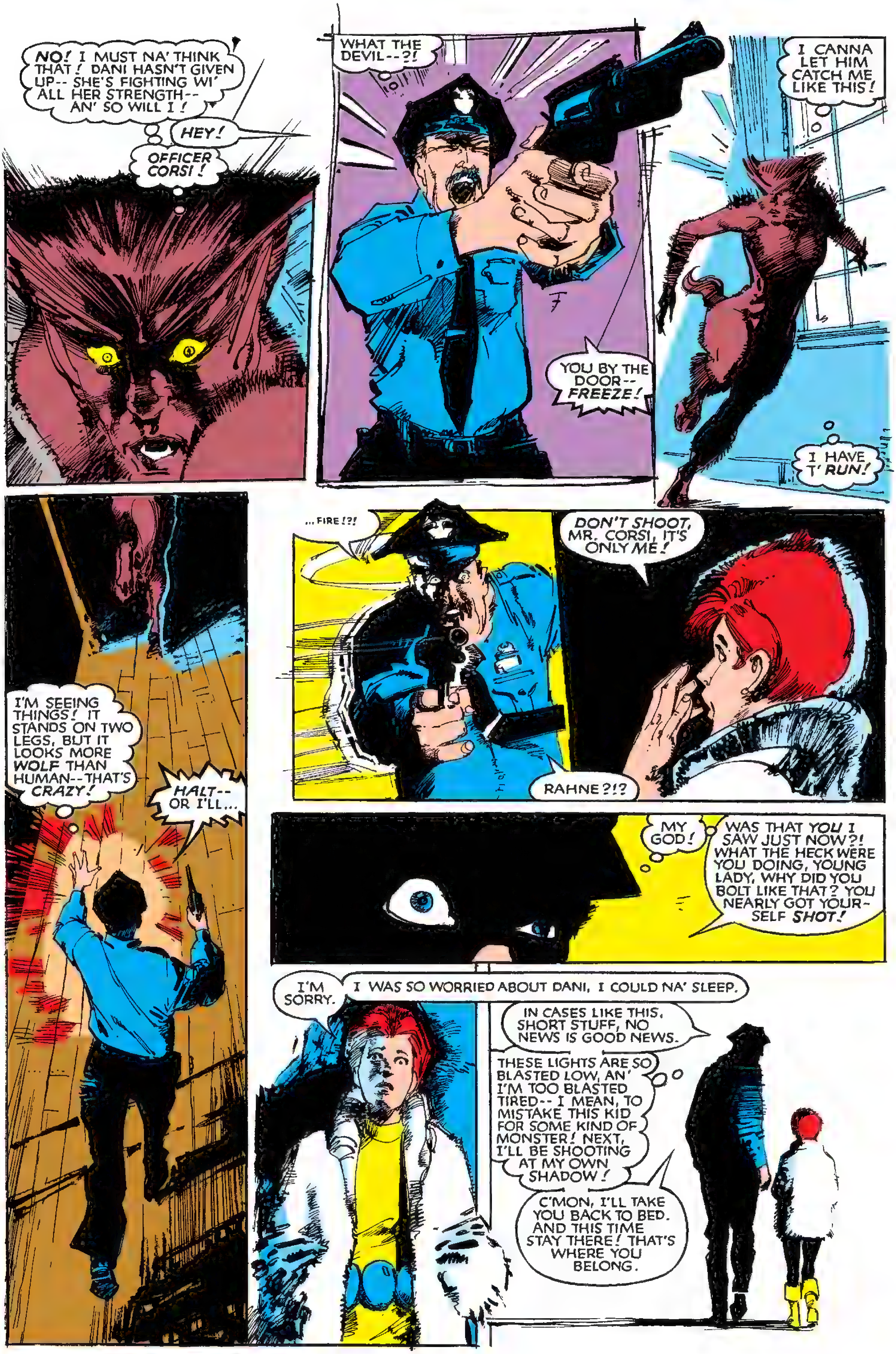

I'M AWARE OF HER-- AN' SHE OF ME!
BUT THE IMAGES ARE BROKEN... BLURRY--
--I CAN BARELY UNDERSTAND THEM!
'TIS THE DOCTORS-- THEY'VE GIVEN HER MEDICINE T' PUT HER T' SLEEP!
TRY HARDER, RAHNE-- BUT BE CAREFUL! WE DON'T WANT TO MAKE THINGS WORSE.
DANI!
HHHIIIII, RAHNEY!
D'YOU HURT?
ONLY WHEN I LAUGH-- GIGGLE!
JUS' KIDDING, KIDDO, I REALLY CAN'T FEEL A THING, IT'S BLISS.
HER BACK'S BROKEN.
POOR KID--EVEN IF SHE SURVIVES, SHE'LL BE TOTALLY PARALYZED.
RAHNEY-- THE BEAR-- LISTEN-- MUST TELL--!
HEART-RATE'S INCREASING--SHE'S REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS!
DON'T LET HER, BLAST IT! ADMINISTER MORE ANAESTHETIC!
HER SYSTEM CAN'T HANDLE THE STRAIN-- WE'RE LOSING HER!

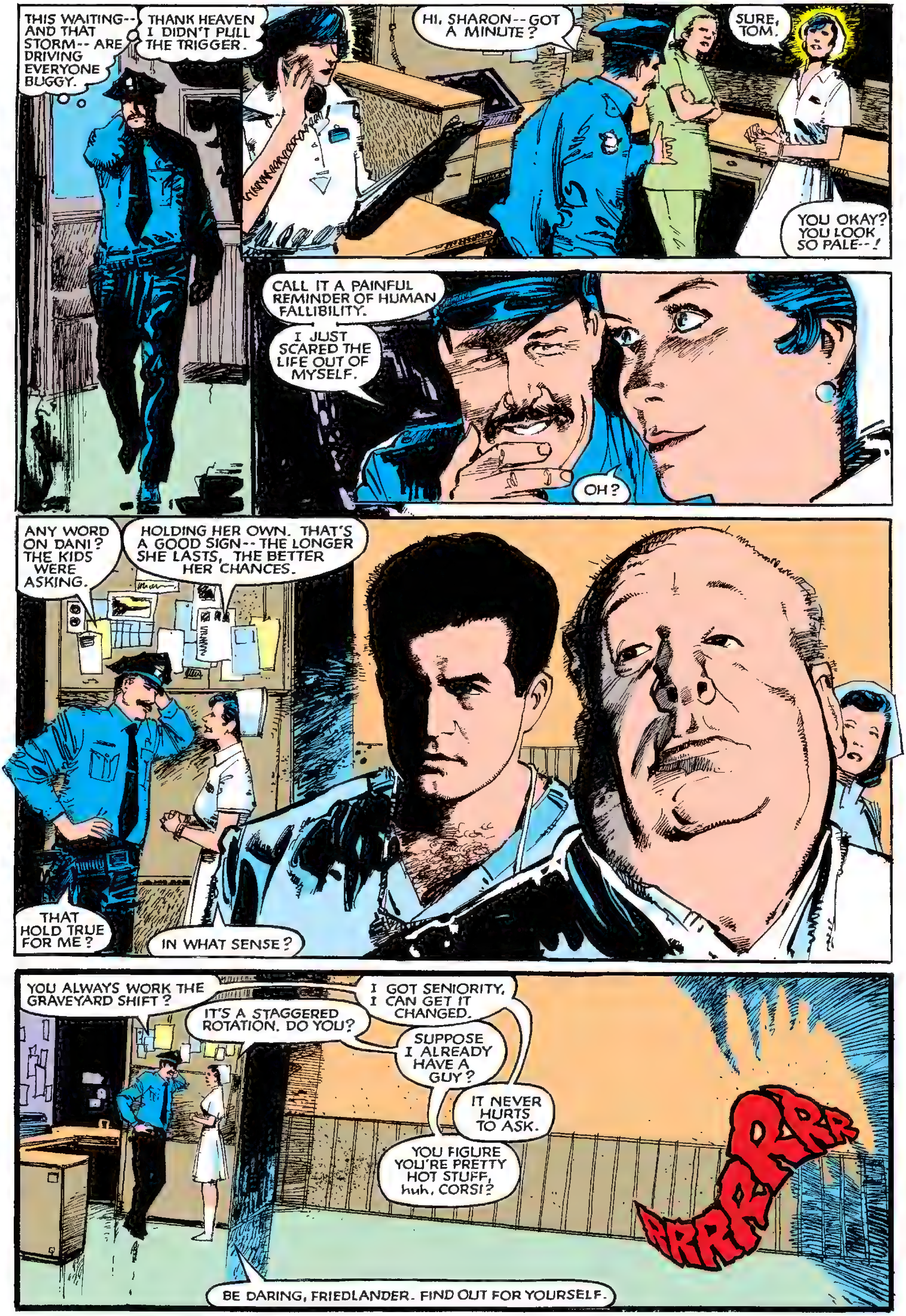

SAM-- DANI'S *DYING!*
AN'-- AN' IT'S *MY* FAULT!
I COULD NA' HEAR HER THOUGHTS, SO *SHE* FORCED HERSELF T' WAKE, T' PROJECT THEM LOUDER.
IF ANYONE'S RESPONSIBLE, CHILD, IT'S *ME*. AH ASKED YOU T' DO IT.
THE BEAR'S NOT DONE WI' HER, SAM. DANI'S CERTAIN IT'LL COME AGAIN.
BUT-- I MUST'VE GOT THE NEXT BIT WRONG-- SHE SAYS THE BEAST IS MORTALLY *SCARED* OF HER.
WHY?
BECAUSE SHE POSSESSES THE POWER T' *DESTROY* IT!
THEN WHY DIDN'T SHE USE IT TO SAVE HERSELF?
I DON'T KNOW, AMARA! SHE WASN'T ABLE T' TELL ME! AN' I DARE NOT ASK HER AGAIN.
OH, SAM-- HOW CAN WE FIGHT SUCH A FEARSOME CREATURE?! IT'S *MAGIC!*
SO AM I.
AND, WHEN YOU WANT TO BE, RAHNE, YOU CAN BE PRETTY FEARSOME YOURSELF. WE'LL GIVE THE BEAST A RUN FOR HIS MONEY.
BESIDES, IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAVE A CHOICE.

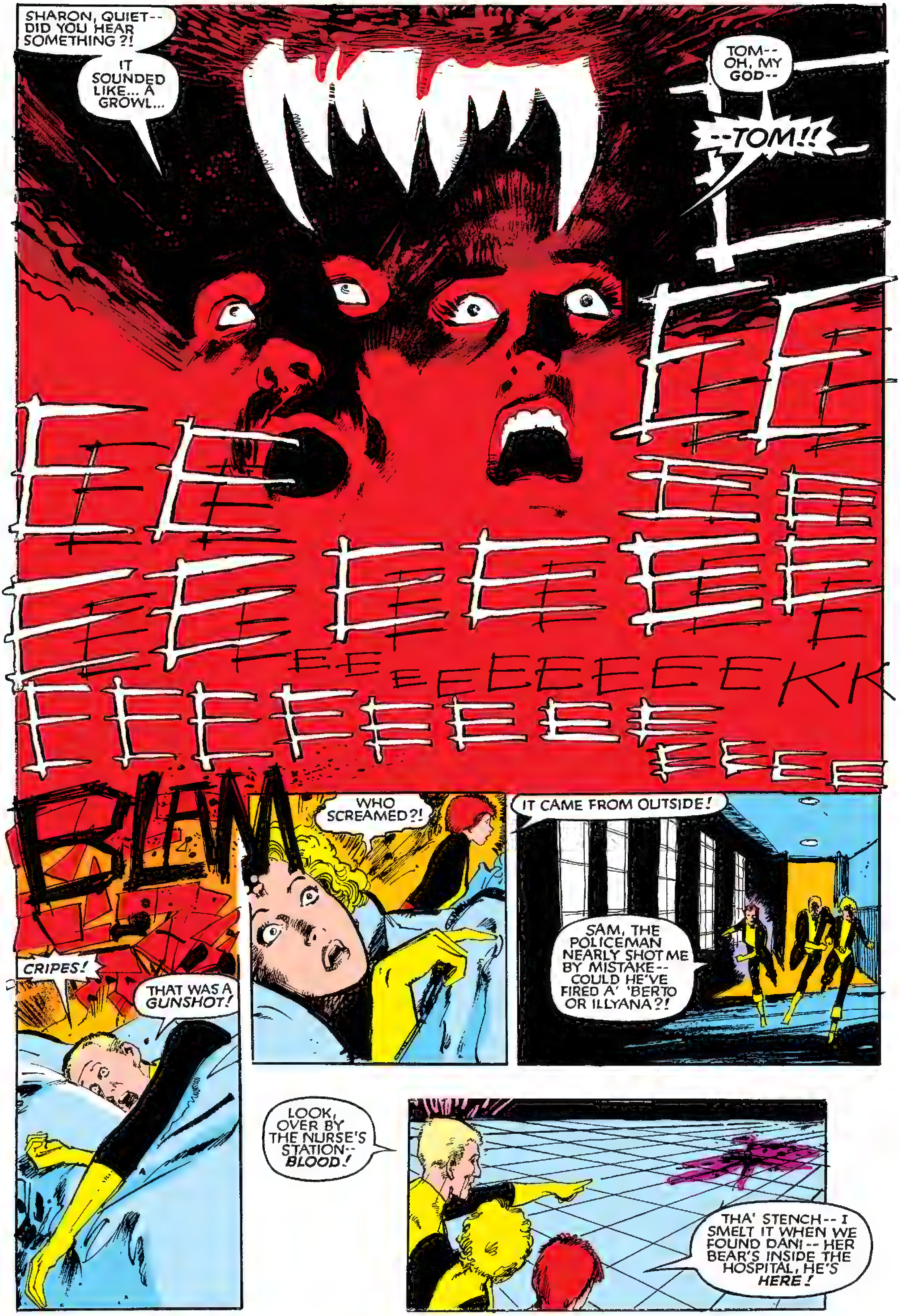

ILLYANA'S RIGHT. THERE'S MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN JUST DANI -- THIS HOSPITAL'S FULL OF HELPLESS PATIENTS, WHO KNOWS WHAT THE BEAR MIGHT DO T' THEM?
EVEN IF WE CAN'T KILL IT, WE'VE AT LEAST GOTTA KEEP IT AT BAY 'TIL THE PROF AND THE X-MEN CAN REACH US.
LIKE IN THE MOVIES, EH, SAM? THE BESEIGED SETTLERS HOLDING OUT WHILE THE *CAVALRY* RACES TO THE RESCUE?!
FOR ALL OUR SAKES, BOBBY -- THEY BETTER ARRIVE IN TIME!
MEANWHILE...
CORSAIR!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
I WAS HAVING THE MOST *MARVELOUS* OF DREAMS, MY FRIEND -- WHO ROUSED THE ***STARJAMMERS*** TO BATTLE STATIONS?!

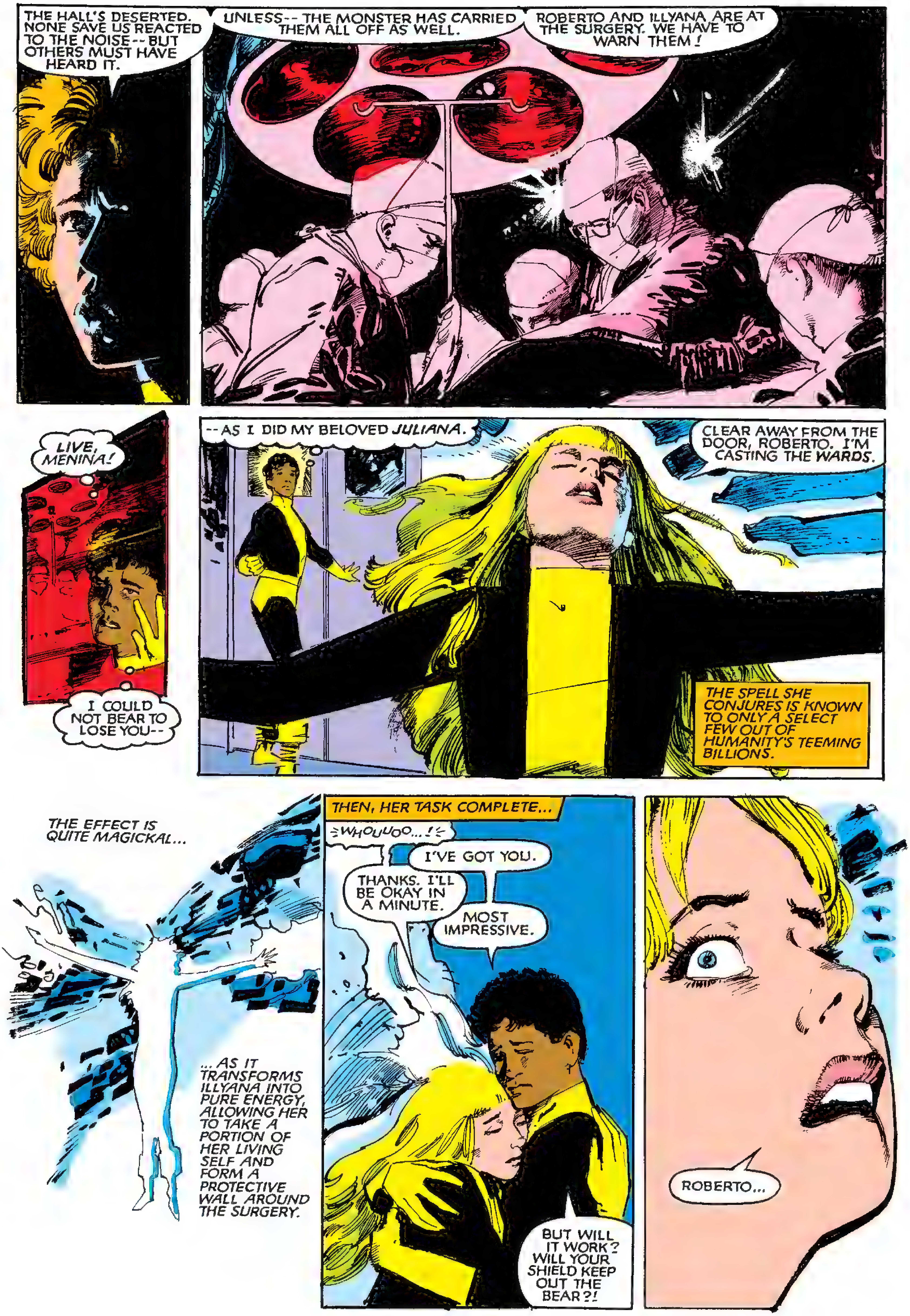

SORRY ABOUT THAT, CH'OD, I'M RESPONSIBLE.
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, BINARY.
TAKE A LOOK AT THE MAIN SCANNER.
WHAT-- IS IT?!
I BELIEVE-- BOTH VESSEL AND LIVING BEING.
WITH THOSE POWER AND PERFORMANCE READINGS, WOMAN?! IMPOSSIBLE!
NEVERTHELESS, CORSAIR, IT EXISTS-- AN ENTITY ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF A HUMAN BEING, TRAVELLING AT ULTRA-LIGHT VELOCITIES, WITH AN ENERGY POTENTIAL THAT MATCHES THE *STARJAMMER'S*.
IS IT A THREAT?
*BEFORE BINARY CAN ANSWER...*
SHARRA AND K'YTHRI PRESERVE US!!
WHAT, PRAY TELL, WAS *THAT?!?*
I'D SAY-- A BIGGER VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL CONTACT.
*CORSAIR, THIS IS WALDO. BOTH ENTITIES ARE ALREADY OUT OF SCANNING RANGE. HOWEVER, ASSUMING A BALLISTIC TRAJECTORY AND PROJECTING THEIR COURSE AHEAD...*
*...THEY WILL DEFINITELY TRAVERSE THE SOL SYSTEM-- AND QUITE POSSIBLY STRIKE THE EARTH.*

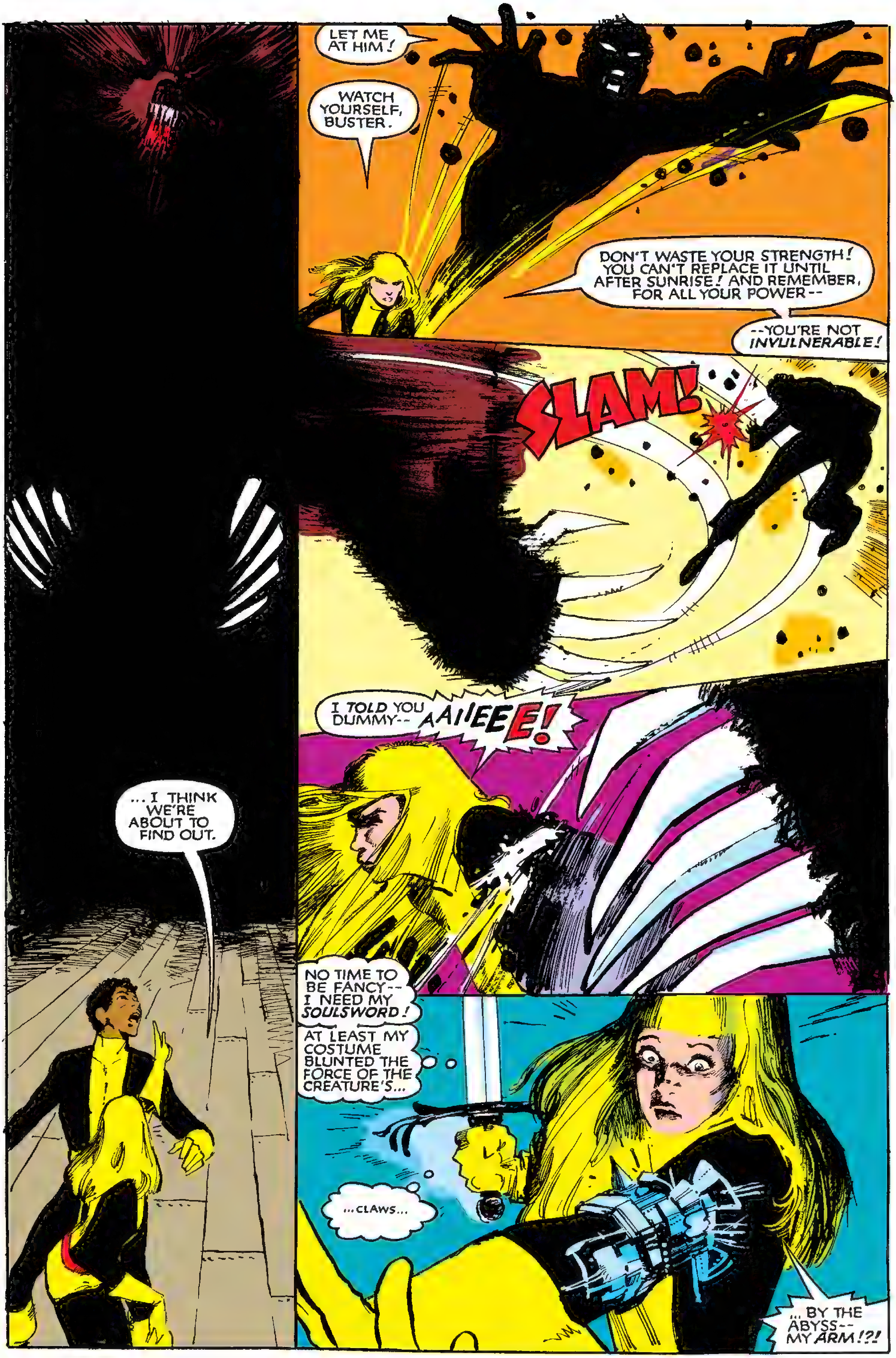

CORSAIR, YOUR CHILDREN -- MY FAMILY -- THE *X-MEN!* CAN WE GO AFTER THOSE CREATURES, WALDO?!
PURSUE, YES. CATCH, NO.
A *STARGATE* COULD TRANSPORT US HOME INSTANTANEOUSLY.
TRUE, BUT BY THE TIME WE CONSTRUCTED A PORTAL LARGE ENOUGH FOR THE STARJAMMER, THE ENTITIES WOULD HAVE ALREADY REACHED TERRA. I'M SORRY, CORSAIR, EVEN A SUBSPACE RADIO WARNING WILL ARRIVE TOO LATE.
ISN'T THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO?!
WAIT. PRAY. AND, SHOULD THE WORST OCCUR --
-- AVENGE!
EARTH.
IT'S BEEN THREE HOURS SINCE DANIELLE MOONSTAR WAS ADMITTED TO MID-COUNTY HOSPITAL.
THE SURGEONS' WORK HAS BARELY BEGUN.
OCH -- THEY'RE CUTTIN' SO MUCH, AN' SO DEEPLY, THERE'LL BE NOTHIN' LEFT O' DANI WHEN THEY'RE DONE! THIS IS NA' MEDICINE -- BUT *BUTCHERY!*
I WANTED T' SEE HOW SHE WAS FARING, BUT NOW I WISH I'D NEVER COME! FORGIVE ME, DEAR FRIEND -- I KNOW IT'S A SIN --
-- BUT BETTER YOU HAD DIED THAN LIVE T' SUFFER SO.

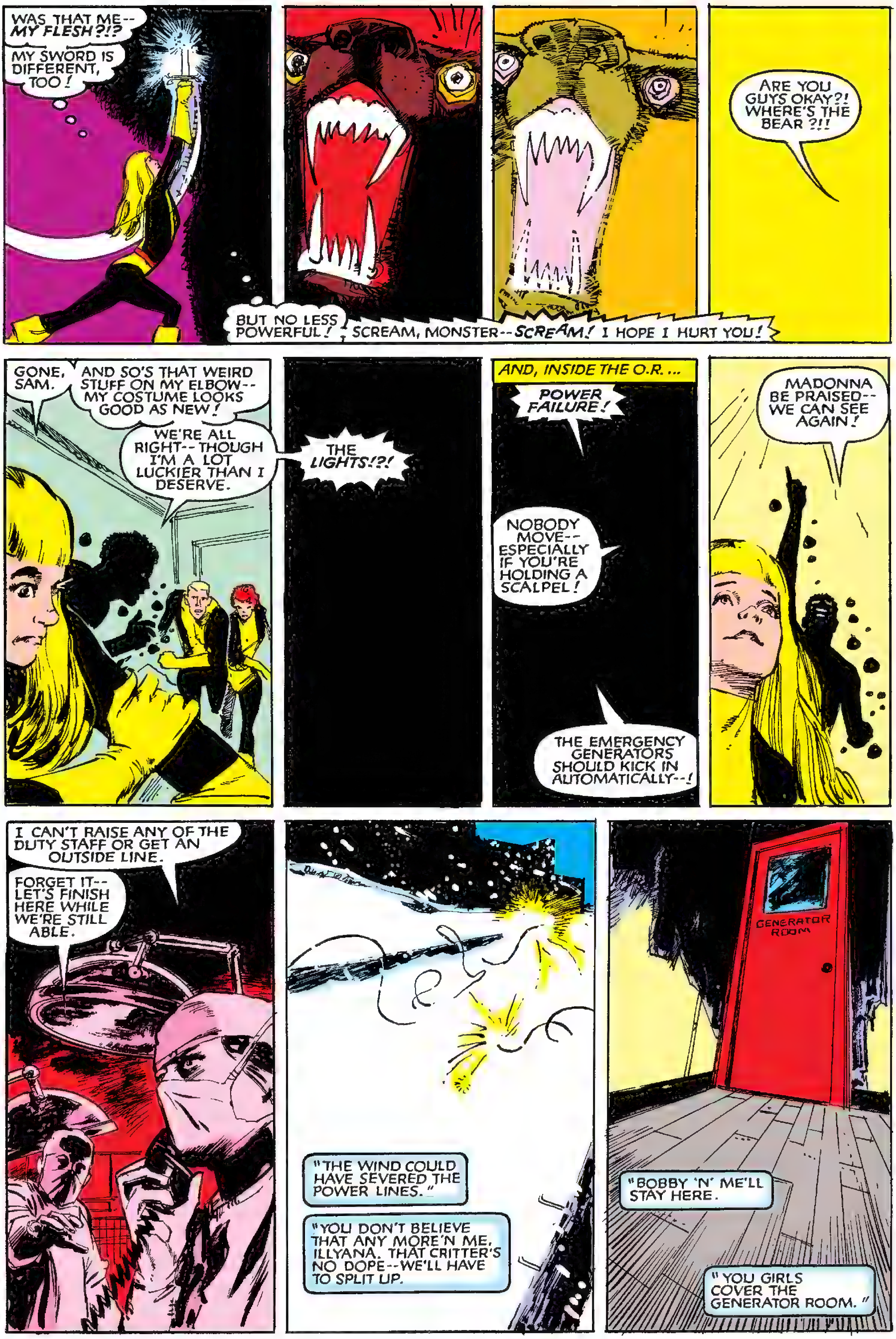

NO! I MUST NA' THINK THAT! DANI HASN'T GIVEN UP-- SHE'S FIGHTING WI' ALL HER STRENGTH-- AN' SO WILL I!
HEY!
OFFICER CORSI!
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!
YOU BY THE DOOR-- FREEZE!
I CANNA LET HIM CATCH ME LIKE THIS!
I HAVE T' RUN!
I'M SEEING THINGS! IT STANDS ON TWO LEGS, BUT IT LOOKS MORE WOLF THAN HUMAN--THAT'S CRAZY!
HALT-- OR I'LL...
...FIRE!?!
DON'T SHOOT, MR. CORSI, IT'S ONLY ME!
RAHNE?!?
MY GOD!
WAS THAT YOU I SAW JUST NOW?! WHAT THE HECK WERE YOU DOING, YOUNG LADY, WHY DID YOU BOLT LIKE THAT? YOU NEARLY GOT YOURSELF SHOT!
I'M SORRY.
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT DANI, I COULD NA' SLEEP.
IN CASES LIKE THIS, SHORT STUFF, NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS.
THESE LIGHTS ARE SO BLASTED LOW, AN' I'M TOO BLASTED TIRED-- I MEAN, TO MISTAKE THIS KID FOR SOME KIND OF MONSTER! NEXT, I'LL BE SHOOTING AT MY OWN SHADOW!
C'MON, I'LL TAKE YOU BACK TO BED. AND THIS TIME STAY THERE! THAT'S WHERE YOU BELONG.

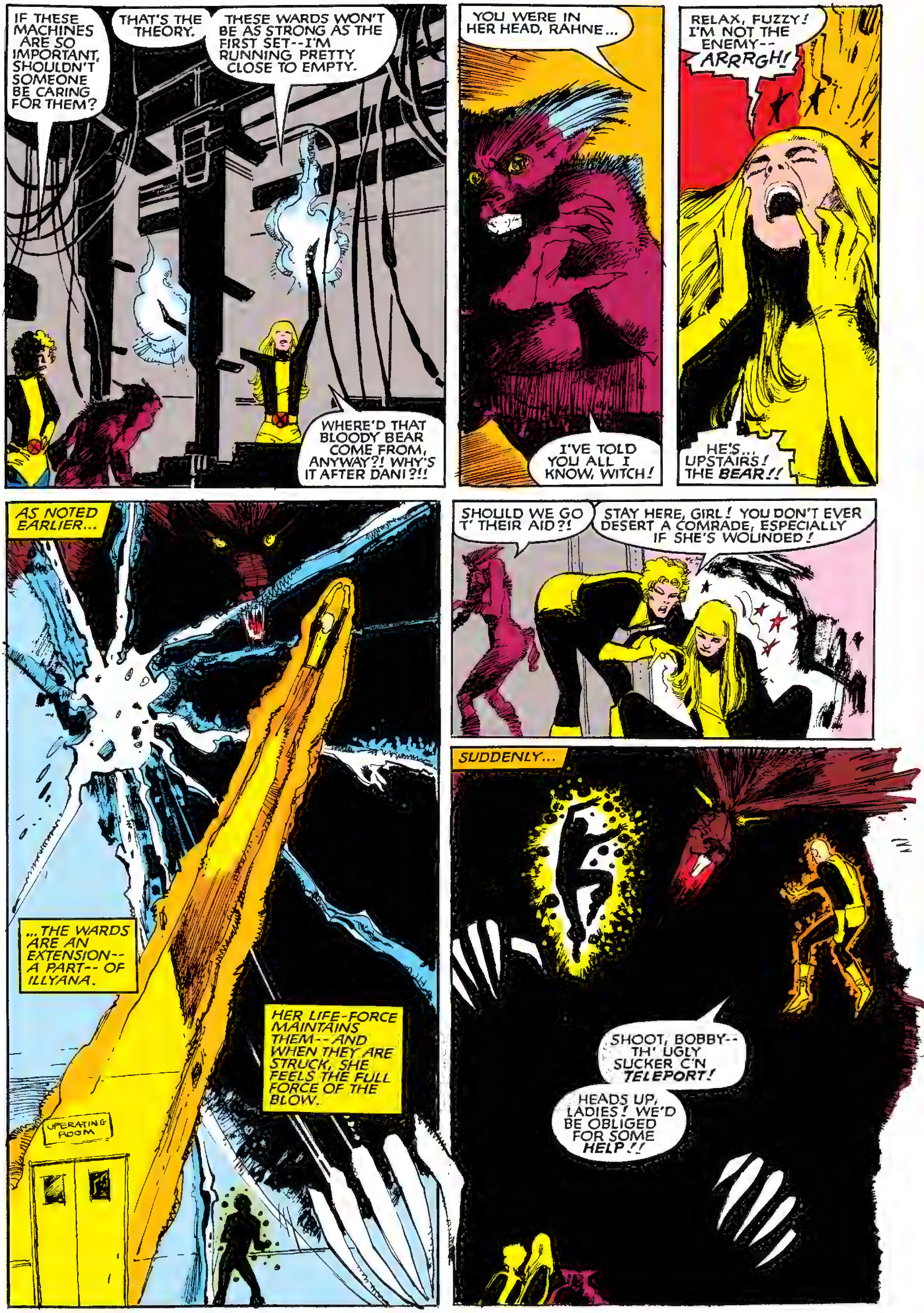

THIS WAITING-- AND THAT STORM-- ARE DRIVING EVERYONE BUGGY.
THANK HEAVEN I DIDN'T PULL THE TRIGGER.
HI, SHARON--GOT A MINUTE?
SURE, TOM.
YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK SO PALE--!
CALL IT A PAINFUL REMINDER OF HUMAN FALLIBILITY.
I JUST SCARED THE LIFE OUT OF MYSELF.
OH?
ANY WORD ON DANI? THE KIDS WERE ASKING.
HOLDING HER OWN. THAT'S A GOOD SIGN--THE LONGER SHE LASTS, THE BETTER HER CHANCES.
THAT HOLD TRUE FOR ME?
IN WHAT SENSE?
YOU ALWAYS WORK THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT?
IT'S A STAGGERED ROTATION. DO YOU?
I GOT SENIORITY. I CAN GET IT CHANGED.
SUPPOSE I ALREADY HAVE A GUY?
IT NEVER HURTS TO ASK.
YOU FIGURE YOU'RE PRETTY HOT STUFF, huh, CORSI?
BE DARING, FRIEDLANDER. FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.
RRRRRRRR

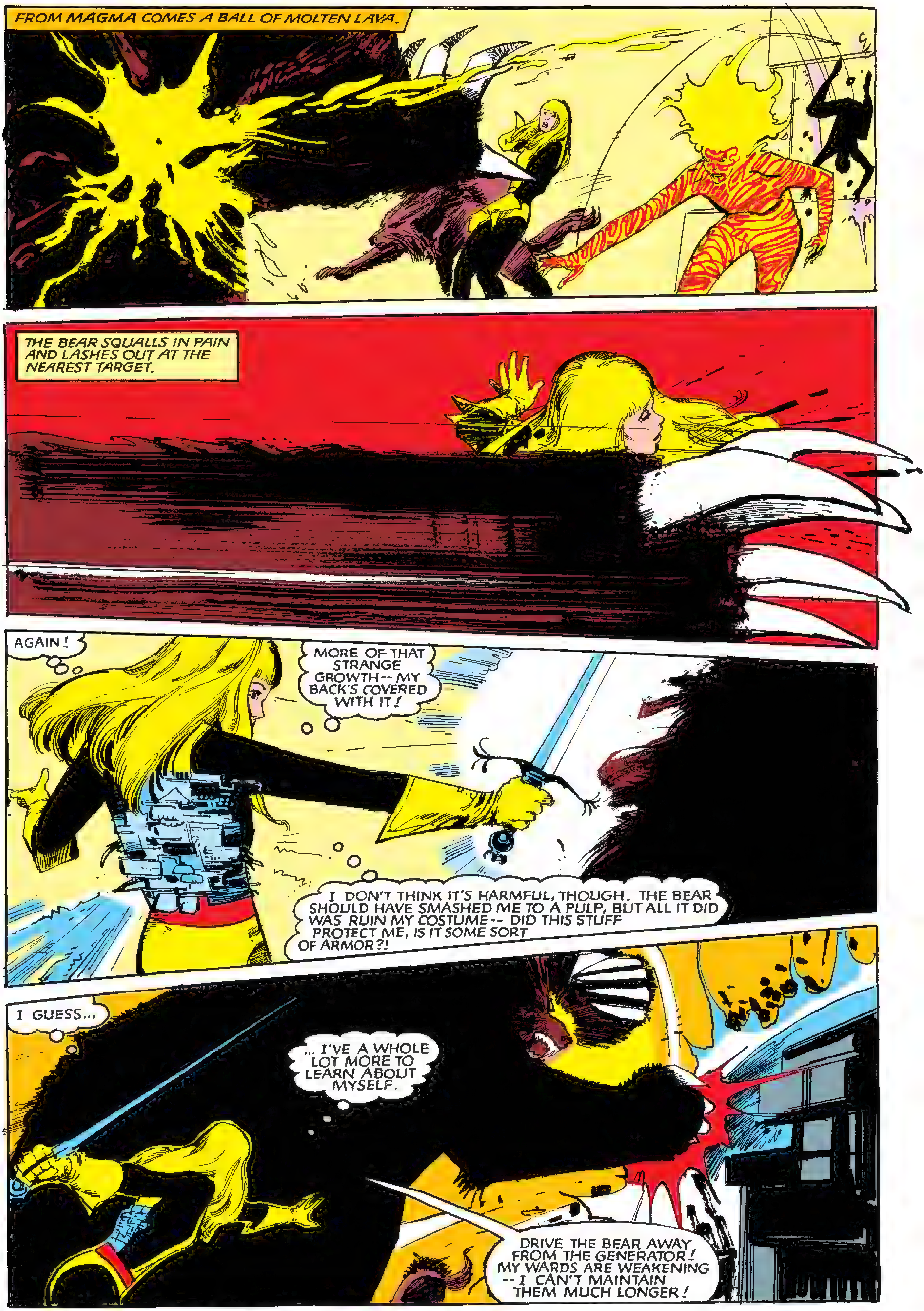

SHARON, QUIET-- DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING?!
IT SOUNDED LIKE... A GROWL...
TOM-- OH, MY GOD--
--TOM!!
IIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEKK
BLAM
WHO SCREAMED?!
IT CAME FROM OUTSIDE!
SAM, THE POLICEMAN NEARLY SHOT ME BY MISTAKE-- COULD HE'VE FIRED A' 'BERTO OR ILLYANA?!
CRIPES!
THAT WAS A GUNSHOT!
LOOK, OVER BY THE NURSE'S STATION-- BLOOD!
THA' STENCH-- I SMELT IT WHEN WE FOUND DANI-- HER BEAR'S INSIDE THE HOSPITAL, HE'S HERE!

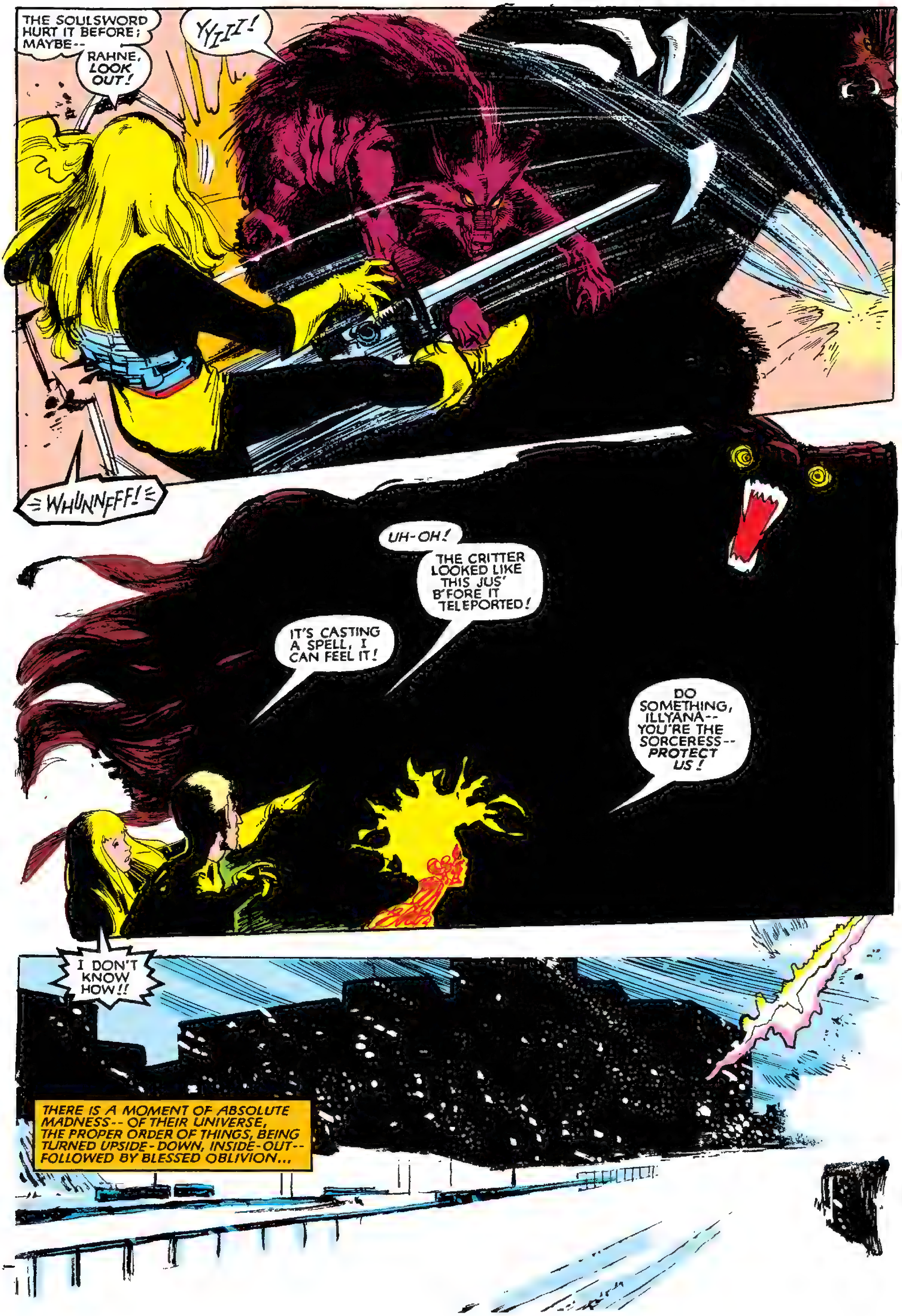

THE HALL'S DESERTED. NONE SAVE US REACTED TO THE NOISE--BUT OTHERS MUST HAVE HEARD IT.
UNLESS-- THE MONSTER HAS CARRIED THEM ALL OFF AS WELL.
ROBERTO AND ILLYANA ARE AT THE SURGERY. WE HAVE TO WARN THEM!
LIVE, MENINA!
I COULD NOT BEAR TO LOSE YOU--
--AS I DID MY BELOVED JULIANA.
CLEAR AWAY FROM THE DOOR, ROBERTO. I'M CASTING THE WARDS.
THE SPELL SHE CONJURES IS KNOWN TO ONLY A SELECT FEW OUT OF HUMANITY'S TEEMING BILLIONS.
THE EFFECT IS QUITE MAGICKAL...
...AS IT TRANSFORMS ILLYANA INTO PURE ENERGY, ALLOWING HER TO TAKE A PORTION OF HER LIVING SELF AND FORM A PROTECTIVE WALL AROUND THE SURGERY.
THEN, HER TASK COMPLETE...
WHOUUOO...!
I'VE GOT YOU.
THANKS. I'LL BE OKAY IN A MINUTE.
MOST IMPRESSIVE.
BUT WILL IT WORK? WILL YOUR SHIELD KEEP OUT THE BEAR?!
ROBERTO...

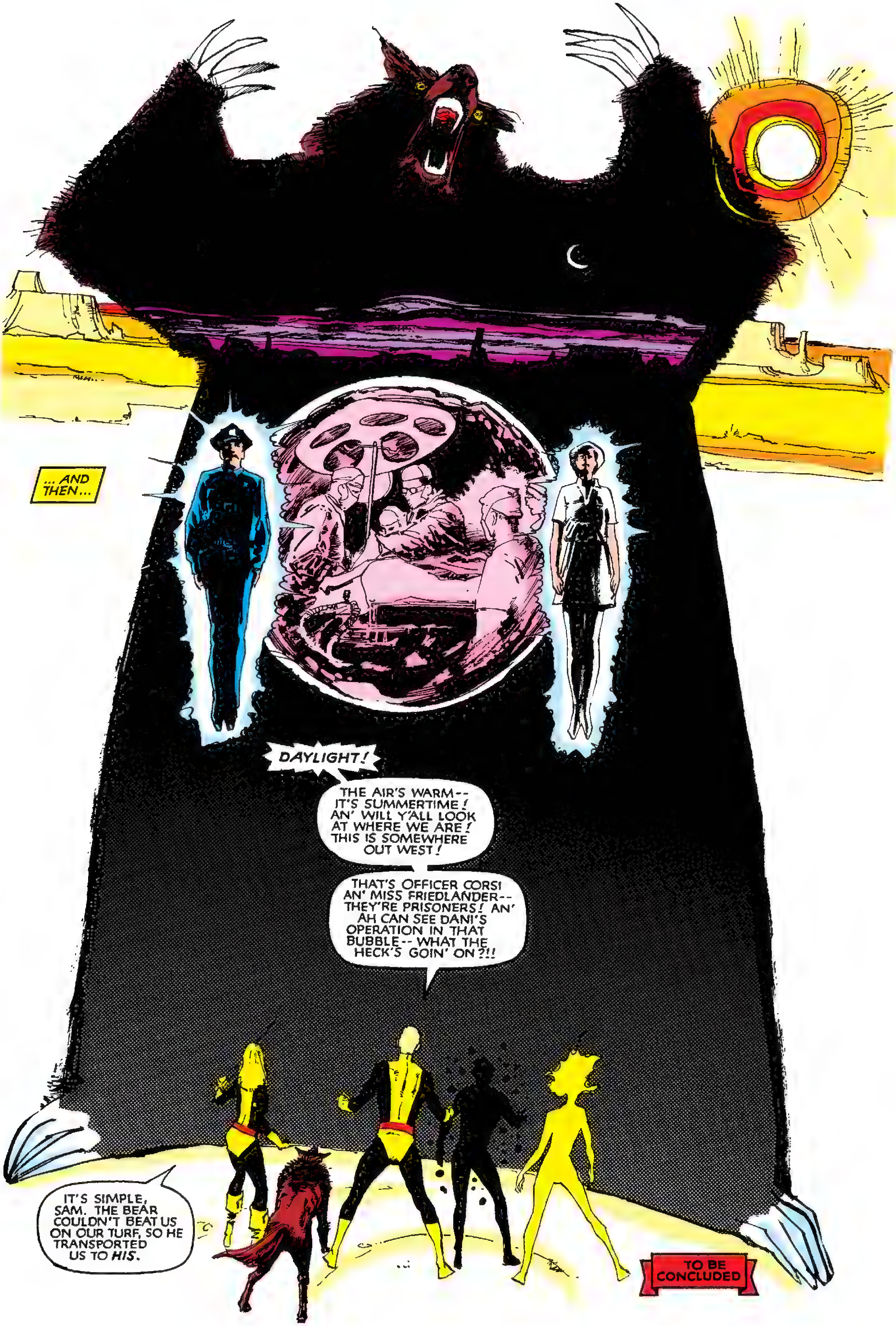

... I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.
LET ME AT HIM!
WATCH YOURSELF, BUSTER.
DON'T WASTE YOUR STRENGTH! YOU CAN'T REPLACE IT UNTIL AFTER SUNRISE! AND REMEMBER, FOR ALL YOUR POWER--
--YOU'RE NOT INVULNERABLE!
SLAM!
I TOLD YOU DUMMY--
AAIIEEEE!
NO TIME TO BE FANCY-- I NEED MY SOULSWORD!
AT LEAST MY COSTUME BLUNTED THE FORCE OF THE CREATURE'S...
...CLAWS...
... BY THE ABYSS-- MY ARM!?!


WAS THAT ME-- *MY FLESH?!?*
MY SWORD IS DIFFERENT, TOO!
BUT NO LESS POWERFUL! SCREAM, MONSTER--*SCREAM!* I HOPE I HURT YOU!
ARE YOU GUYS OKAY?! WHERE'S THE BEAR?!!
GONE, SAM.
AND SO'S THAT WEIRD STUFF ON MY ELBOW-- MY COSTUME LOOKS GOOD AS NEW!
WE'RE ALL RIGHT-- THOUGH I'M A LOT LUCKIER THAN I DESERVE.
THE *LIGHTS!?!*
*AND, INSIDE THE O.R. ...*
*POWER FAILURE!*
NOBODY MOVE-- ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE HOLDING A SCALPEL!
THE EMERGENCY GENERATORS SHOULD KICK IN AUTOMATICALLY--!
MADONNA BE PRAISED-- WE CAN SEE AGAIN!
I CAN'T RAISE ANY OF THE DUTY STAFF OR GET AN OUTSIDE LINE.
FORGET IT-- LET'S FINISH HERE WHILE WE'RE STILL ABLE.
"THE WIND COULD HAVE SEVERED THE POWER LINES."
"YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT ANY MORE'N ME, ILLYANA. THAT CRITTER'S NO DOPE--WE'LL HAVE TO SPLIT UP.
GENERATOR ROOM
"BOBBY 'N' ME'LL STAY HERE.
"YOU GIRLS COVER THE GENERATOR ROOM."


IF THESE MACHINES ARE SO IMPORTANT, SHOULDN'T SOMEONE BE CARING FOR THEM?
THAT'S THE THEORY.
THESE WARDS WON'T BE AS STRONG AS THE FIRST SET--I'M RUNNING PRETTY CLOSE TO EMPTY.
WHERE'D THAT BLOODY BEAR COME FROM, ANYWAY?! WHY'S IT AFTER DANI?!!
YOU WERE IN HER HEAD, RAHNE...
I'VE TOLD YOU ALL I KNOW, WITCH!
RELAX, FUZZY! I'M NOT THE ENEMY--
ARRRGH!
HE'S... UPSTAIRS! THE BEAR!!
AS NOTED EARLIER...
...THE WARDS ARE AN EXTENSION-- A PART-- OF ILLYANA.
HER LIFE-FORCE MAINTAINS THEM--AND WHEN THEY ARE STRUCK, SHE FEELS THE FULL FORCE OF THE BLOW.
OPERATING ROOM
SHOULD WE GO T' THEIR AID?!
STAY HERE, GIRL! YOU DON'T EVER DESERT A COMRADE, ESPECIALLY IF SHE'S WOUNDED!
SUDDENLY...
SHOOT, BOBBY-- TH' UGLY SUCKER C'N TELEPORT!
HEADS UP, LADIES! WE'D BE OBLIGED FOR SOME HELP!!


FROM MAGMA COMES A BALL OF MOLTEN LAVA.
THE BEAR SQUALLS IN PAIN AND LASHES OUT AT THE NEAREST TARGET.
AGAIN!
MORE OF THAT STRANGE GROWTH-- MY BACK'S COVERED WITH IT!
I DON'T THINK IT'S HARMFUL, THOUGH. THE BEAR SHOULD HAVE SMASHED ME TO A PULP, BUT ALL IT DID WAS RUIN MY COSTUME-- DID THIS STUFF PROTECT ME, IS IT SOME SORT OF ARMOR?!
I GUESS...
...I'VE A WHOLE LOT MORE TO LEARN ABOUT MYSELF.
DRIVE THE BEAR AWAY FROM THE GENERATOR! MY WARDS ARE WEAKENING -- I CAN'T MAINTAIN THEM MUCH LONGER!


THE SOULSWORD HURT IT BEFORE; MAYBE--
RAHNE, LOOK OUT!
YYIII!
WHUNNFFF!
UH-OH!
THE CRITTER LOOKED LIKE THIS JUS' B'FORE IT TELEPORTED!
IT'S CASTING A SPELL, I CAN FEEL IT!
DO SOMETHING, ILLYANA-- YOU'RE THE SORCERESS-- PROTECT US!
I DON'T KNOW HOW!!
THERE IS A MOMENT OF ABSOLUTE MADNESS-- OF THEIR UNIVERSE, THE PROPER ORDER OF THINGS, BEING TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN, INSIDE-OUT-- FOLLOWED BY BLESSED OBLIVION...


... AND THEN...
DAYLIGHT!
THE AIR'S WARM-- IT'S SUMMERTIME! AN' WILL Y'ALL LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE! THIS IS SOMEWHERE OUT WEST!
THAT'S OFFICER CORSI AN' MISS FRIEDLANDER-- THEY'RE PRISONERS! AN' AH CAN SEE DANI'S OPERATION IN THAT BUBBLE-- WHAT THE HECK'S GOIN' ON?!!
IT'S SIMPLE, SAM. THE BEAR COULDN'T BEAT US ON OUR TURF, SO HE TRANSPORTED US TO HIS.
TO BE CONCLUDED

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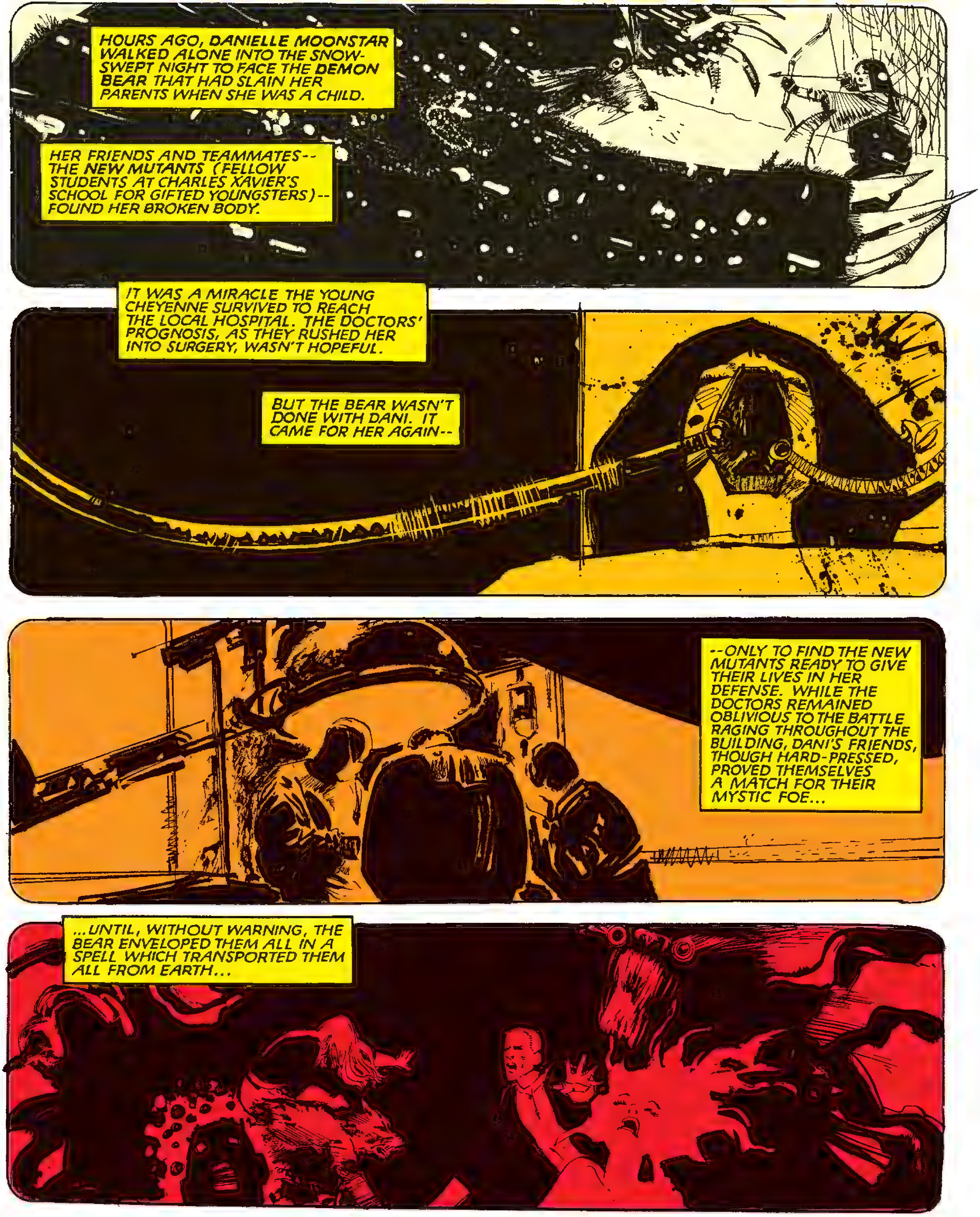
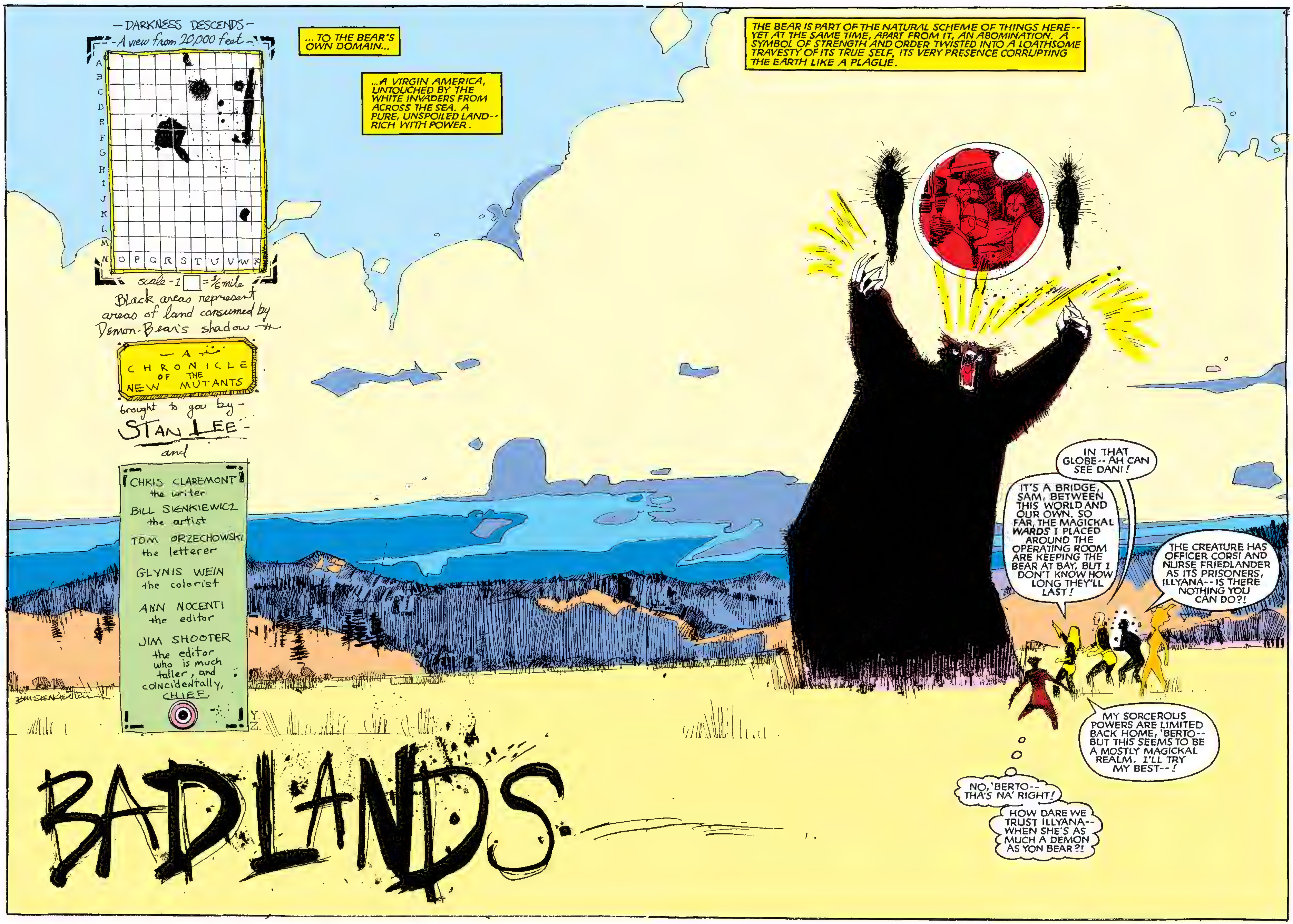
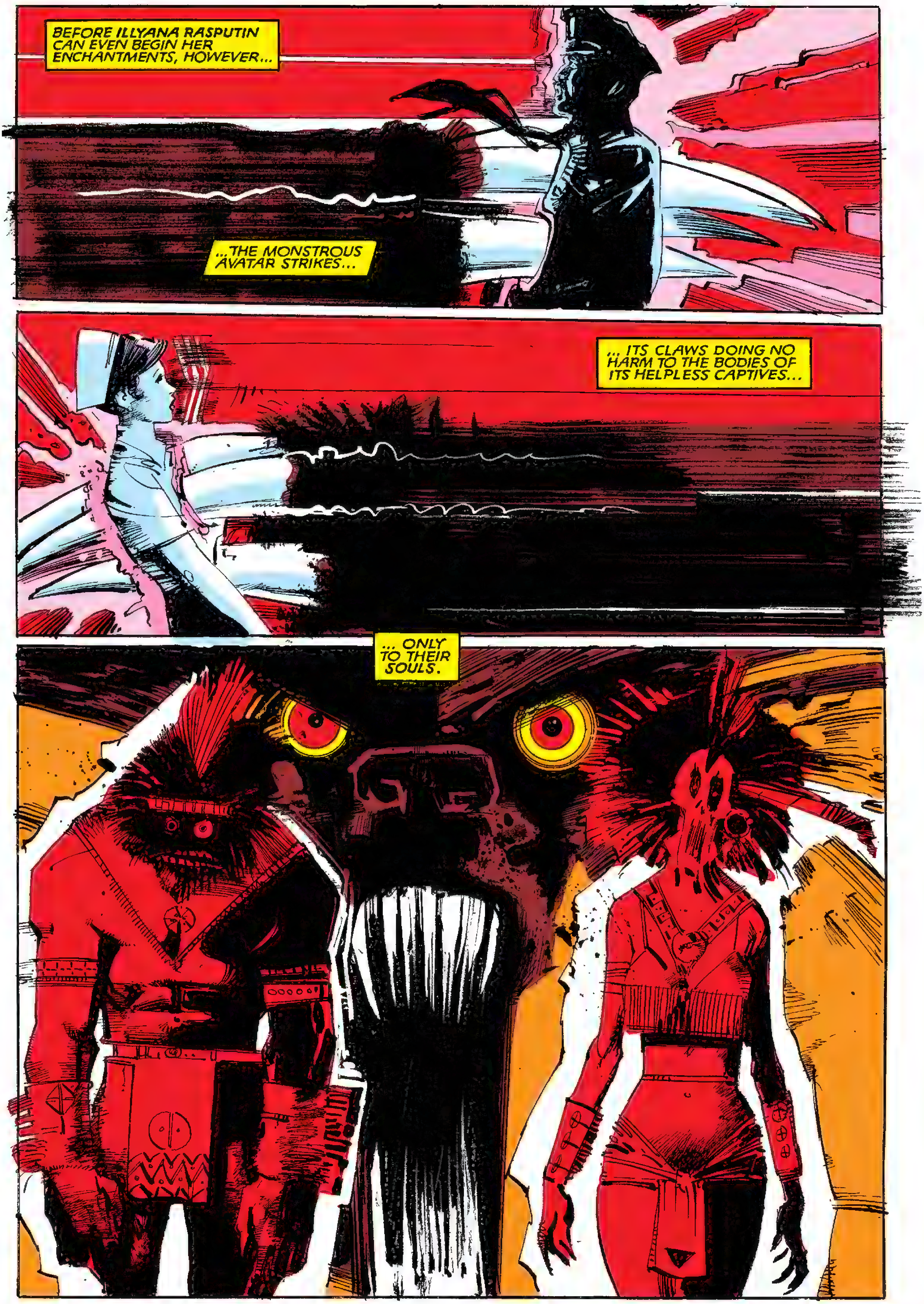
THE NEW MUTANTS
BADLANDS

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

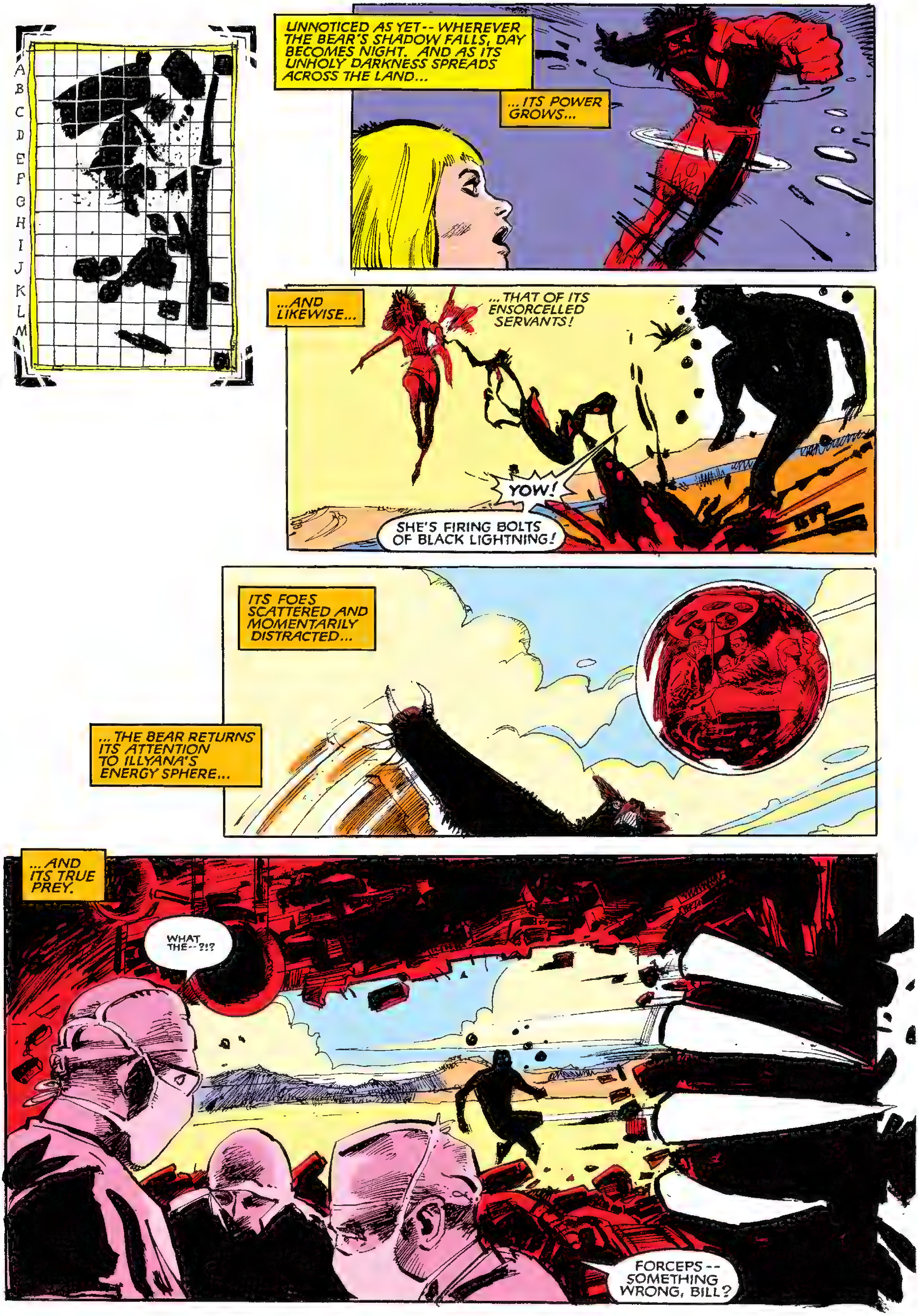
# THE NEW MUTANTS™


HOURS AGO, DANIELLE MOONSTAR WALKED ALONE INTO THE SNOW-SWEPT NIGHT TO FACE THE DEMON BEAR THAT HAD SLAIN HER PARENTS WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD.
HER FRIENDS AND TEAMMATES--THE NEW MUTANTS (FELLOW STUDENTS AT CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS)--FOUND HER BROKEN BODY.
IT WAS A MIRACLE THE YOUNG CHEYENNE SURVIVED TO REACH THE LOCAL HOSPITAL. THE DOCTORS' PROGNOSIS, AS THEY RUSHED HER INTO SURGERY, WASN'T HOPEFUL.
BUT THE BEAR WASN'T DONE WITH DANI. IT CAME FOR HER AGAIN--
--ONLY TO FIND THE NEW MUTANTS READY TO GIVE THEIR LIVES IN HER DEFENSE. WHILE THE DOCTORS REMAINED OBLIVIOUS TO THE BATTLE RAGING THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING, DANI'S FRIENDS, THOUGH HARD-PRESSED, PROVED THEMSELVES A MATCH FOR THEIR MYSTIC FOE...
...UNTIL, WITHOUT WARNING, THE BEAR ENVELOPED THEM ALL IN A SPELL WHICH TRANSPORTED THEM ALL FROM EARTH...


— DARKNESS DESCENDS —
— A view from 20,000 feet —
scale - 1 ☐ = 1/6 mile
Black areas represent areas of land consumed by Demon-Bear's shadow
... TO THE BEAR'S OWN DOMAIN...
...A VIRGIN AMERICA, UNTOUCHED BY THE WHITE INVADERS FROM ACROSS THE SEA. A PURE, UNSPOILED LAND-- RICH WITH POWER.
THE BEAR IS PART OF THE NATURAL SCHEME OF THINGS HERE-- YET AT THE SAME TIME, APART FROM IT, AN ABOMINATION. A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH AND ORDER TWISTED INTO A LOATHSOME TRAVESTY OF ITS TRUE SELF, ITS VERY PRESENCE CORRUPTING THE EARTH LIKE A PLAGUE.
— A CHRONICLE OF THE NEW MUTANTS
brought to you by -
STAN LEE -
and
CHRIS CLAREMONT the writer
BILL SIENKIEWICZ the artist
TOM ORZECHOWSKI the letterer
GLYNIS WEIN the colorist
ANN NOCENTI the editor
JIM SHOOTER the editor who is much taller, and coincidentally, CHIEF
BADLANDS
IN THAT GLOBE-- AH CAN SEE DANI!
IT'S A BRIDGE, SAM, BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND OUR OWN. SO FAR, THE MAGICKAL WARDS I PLACED AROUND THE OPERATING ROOM ARE KEEPING THE BEAR AT BAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THEY'LL LAST!
THE CREATURE HAS OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER AS ITS PRISONERS, ILLYANA-- IS THERE NOTHING YOU CAN DO?!
MY SORCEROUS POWERS ARE LIMITED BACK HOME, 'BERTO-- BUT THIS SEEMS TO BE A MOSTLY MAGICKAL REALM. I'LL TRY MY BEST--!
NO, 'BERTO-- THA'S NA' RIGHT!
HOW DARE WE TRUST ILLYANA-- WHEN SHE'S AS MUCH A DEMON AS YON BEAR?!


BEFORE ILLYANA RASPUTIN CAN EVEN BEGIN HER ENCHANTMENTS, HOWEVER...
...THE MONSTROUS AVATAR STRIKES...
... ITS CLAWS DOING NO HARM TO THE BODIES OF ITS HELPLESS CAPTIVES...
... ONLY TO THEIR SOULS.

NO!
IN HIS INCARNATION AS CANNONBALL, SAM GUTHRIE IS THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF HIS NAMESAKE. GIVING FREE REIN TO HIS RAGE -- AND IGNORING ILLYANA'S CRY OF WARNING -- HE ATTACKS WITH ALL THE FORCE AT HIS COMMAND.
THE IMPACT WOULD HAVE LEVELLED A SKYSCRAPER -- AND, INDEED, THE BEAR IS STUNNED --
-- BUT SAM'S ACTION COMES TOO LATE TO SAVE ITS VICTIMS.
THEY'VE BECOME *DEMONS* -- PERHAPS I CAN BIND THEM?!
WHOULFF!
CAUGHT ME THAT TIME -- SUCKER MEANS BUSINESS -- GIVIN' ME A TASTE O' MY OWN MEDICINE!
GOOD THING AH'M INVULNERABLE WHEN AH'M BLASTIN' OR AH'D BE DONE FOR!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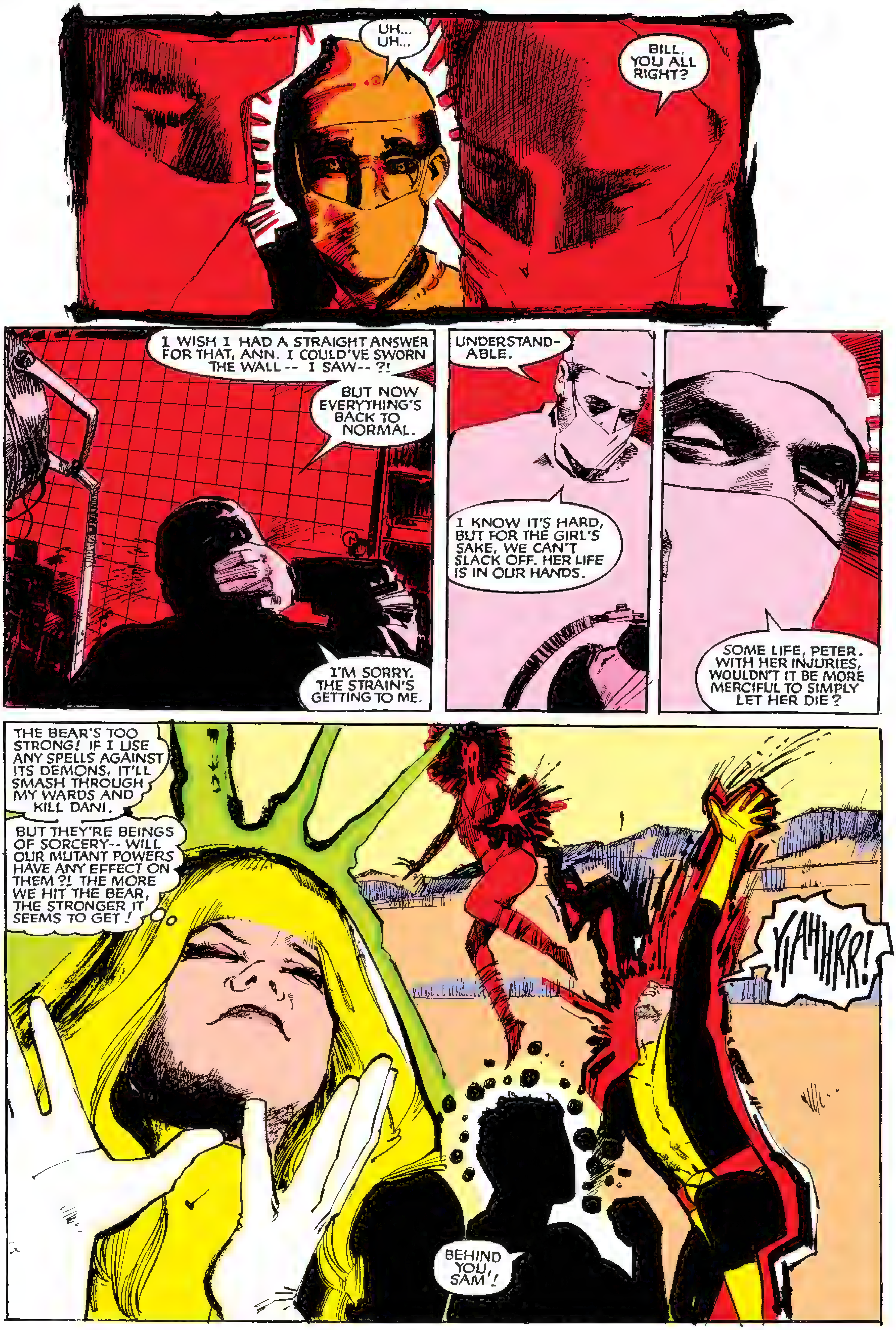
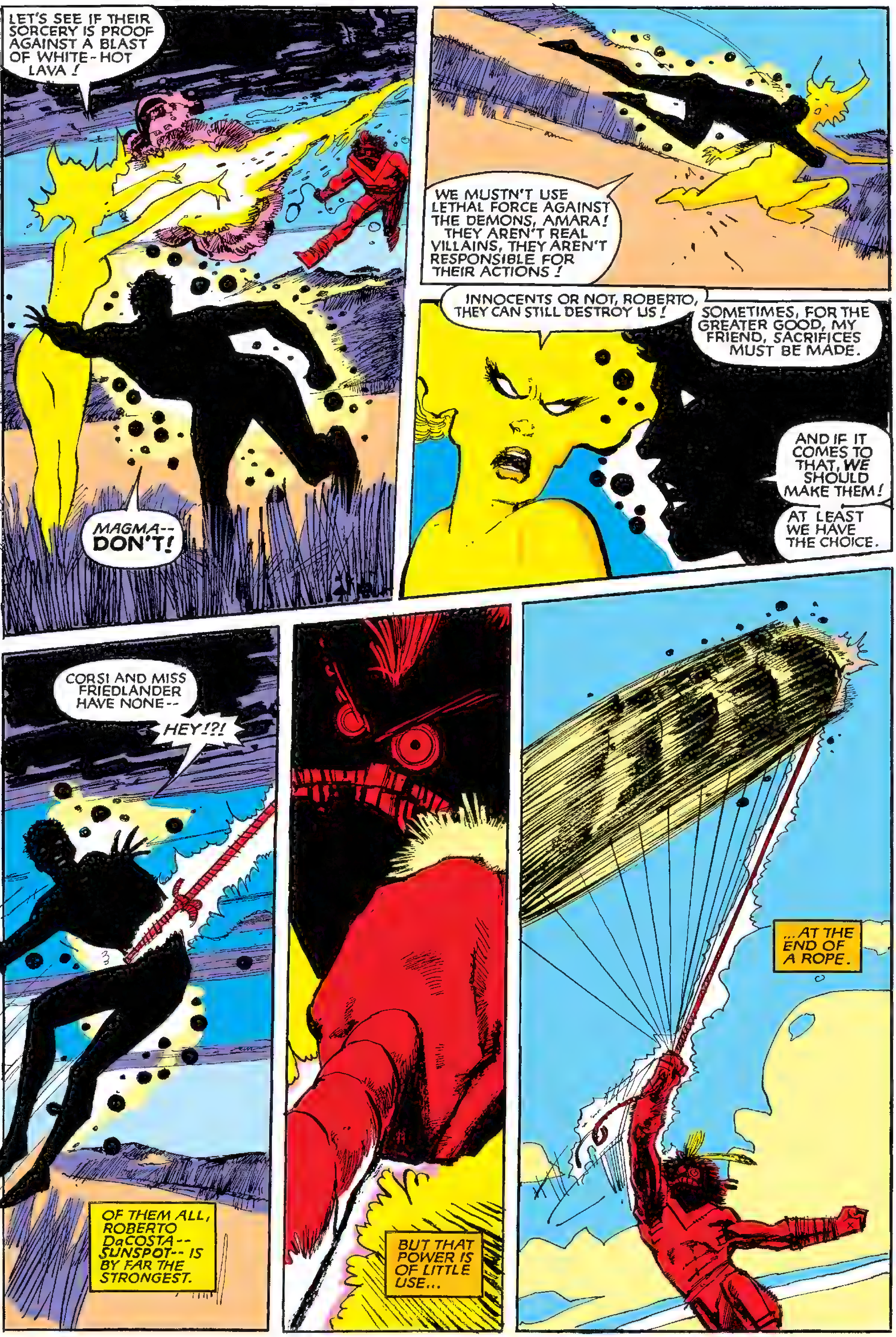
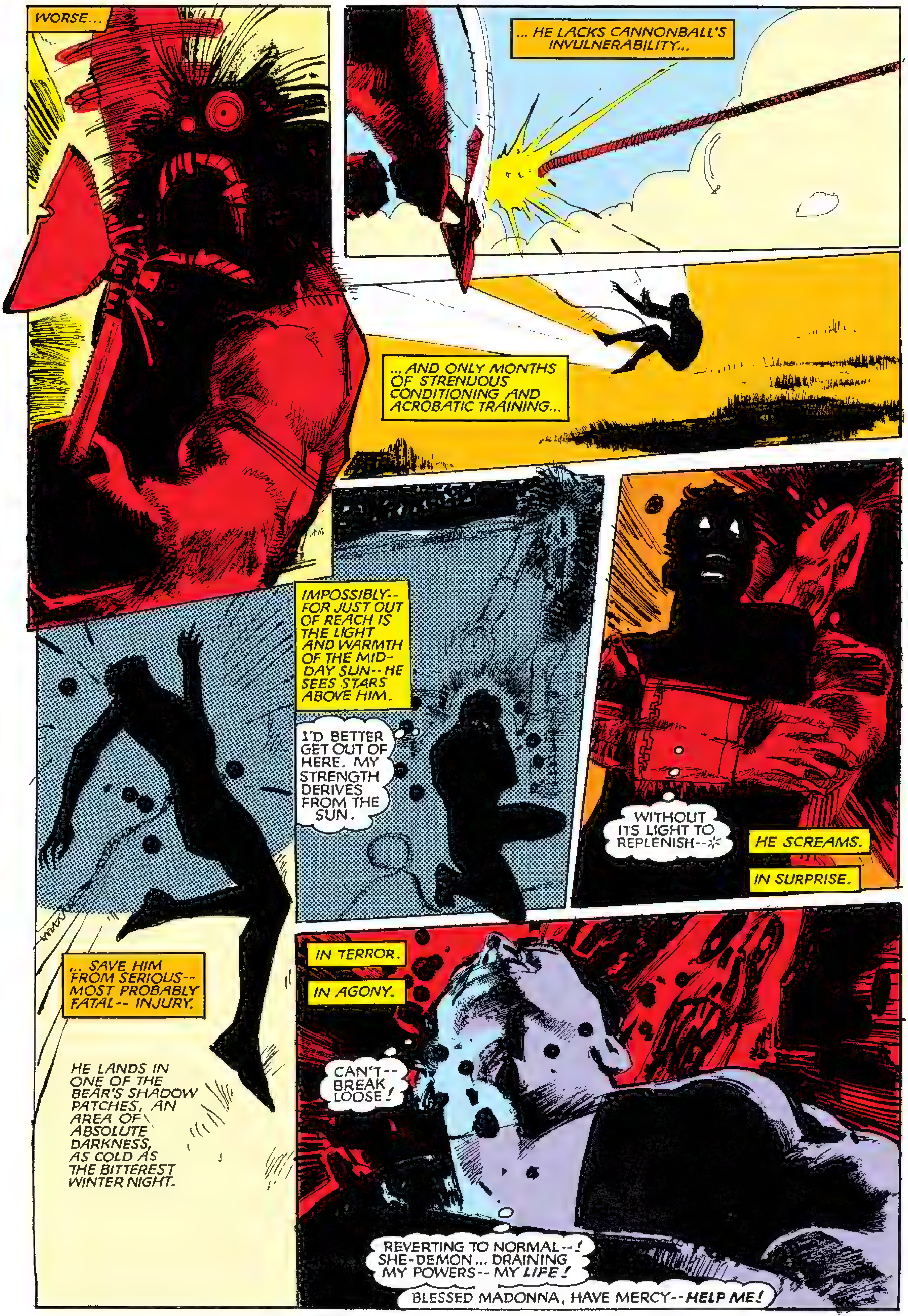
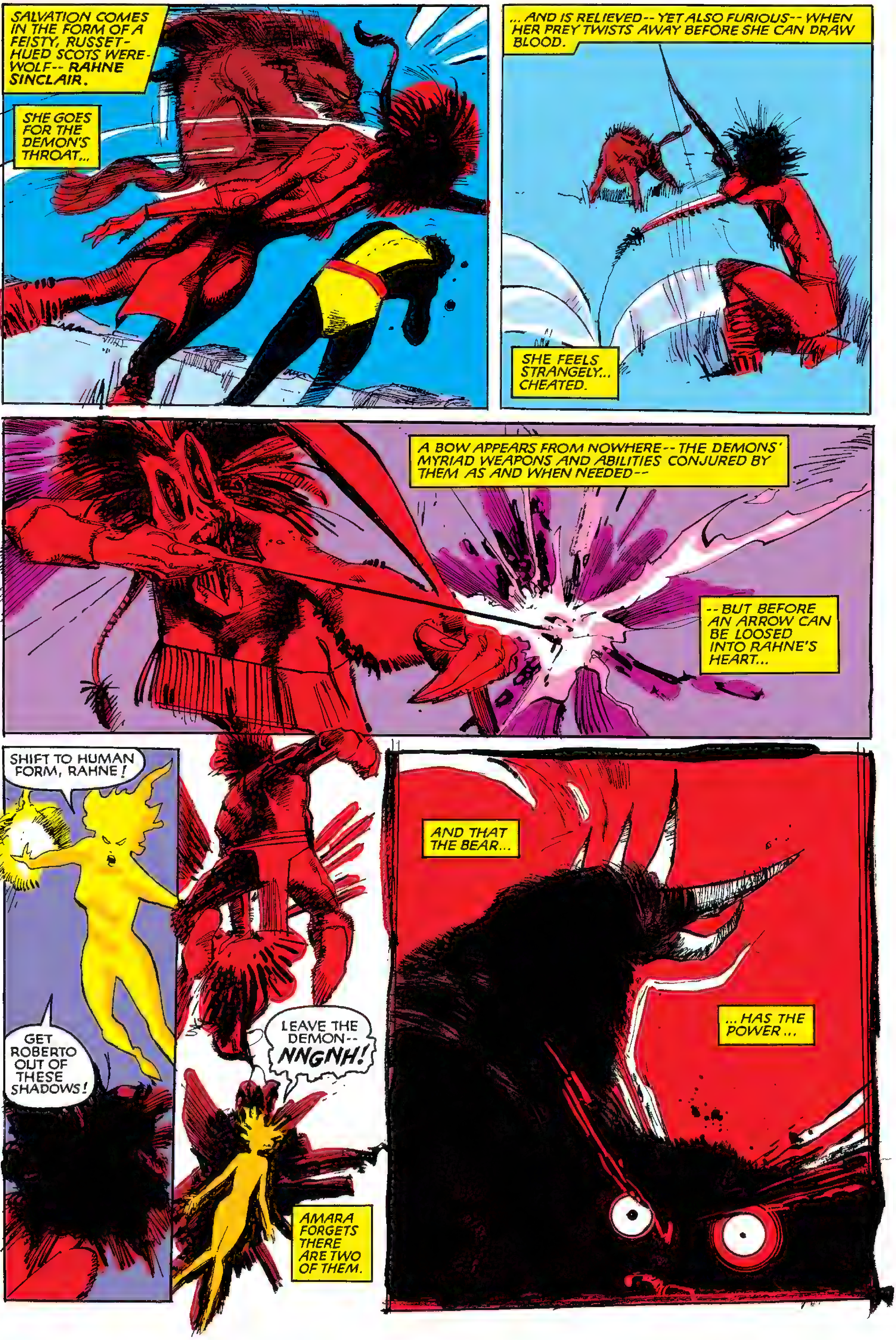
M
UNNOTICED AS YET-- WHEREVER THE BEAR'S SHADOW FALLS, DAY BECOMES NIGHT. AND AS ITS UNHOLY DARKNESS SPREADS ACROSS THE LAND...
...ITS POWER GROWS...
...AND LIKEWISE...
...THAT OF ITS ENSORCELLED SERVANTS!
YOW!
SHE'S FIRING BOLTS OF BLACK LIGHTNING!
ITS FOES SCATTERED AND MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED...
...THE BEAR RETURNS ITS ATTENTION TO ILLYANA'S ENERGY SPHERE...
...AND ITS TRUE PREY.
WHAT THE--?!?
FORCEPS-- SOMETHING WRONG, BILL?


UH... UH...
BILL, YOU ALL RIGHT?
I WISH I HAD A STRAIGHT ANSWER FOR THAT, ANN. I COULD'VE SWORN THE WALL -- I SAW-- ?!
BUT NOW EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL.
I'M SORRY. THE STRAIN'S GETTING TO ME.
UNDERSTANDABLE.
I KNOW IT'S HARD, BUT FOR THE GIRL'S SAKE, WE CAN'T SLACK OFF. HER LIFE IS IN OUR HANDS.
SOME LIFE, PETER. WITH HER INJURIES, WOULDN'T IT BE MORE MERCIFUL TO SIMPLY LET HER DIE?
THE BEAR'S TOO STRONG! IF I USE ANY SPELLS AGAINST ITS DEMONS, IT'LL SMASH THROUGH MY WARDS AND KILL DANI.
BUT THEY'RE BEINGS OF SORCERY-- WILL OUR MUTANT POWERS HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THEM?! THE MORE WE HIT THE BEAR, THE STRONGER IT SEEMS TO GET!
YAAHRR!
BEHIND YOU, SAM!


LET'S SEE IF THEIR SORCERY IS PROOF AGAINST A BLAST OF WHITE-HOT LAVA!
MAGMA-- DON'T!
WE MUSTN'T USE LETHAL FORCE AGAINST THE DEMONS, AMARA! THEY AREN'T REAL VILLAINS, THEY AREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS!
INNOCENTS OR NOT, ROBERTO, THEY CAN STILL DESTROY US!
SOMETIMES, FOR THE GREATER GOOD, MY FRIEND, SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE.
AND IF IT COMES TO THAT, WE SHOULD MAKE THEM!
AT LEAST WE HAVE THE CHOICE.
CORSI AND MISS FRIEDLANDER HAVE NONE--
HEY!?!
OF THEM ALL, ROBERTO DaCOSTA-- SUNSPOT-- IS BY FAR THE STRONGEST.
BUT THAT POWER IS OF LITTLE USE...
...AT THE END OF A ROPE.

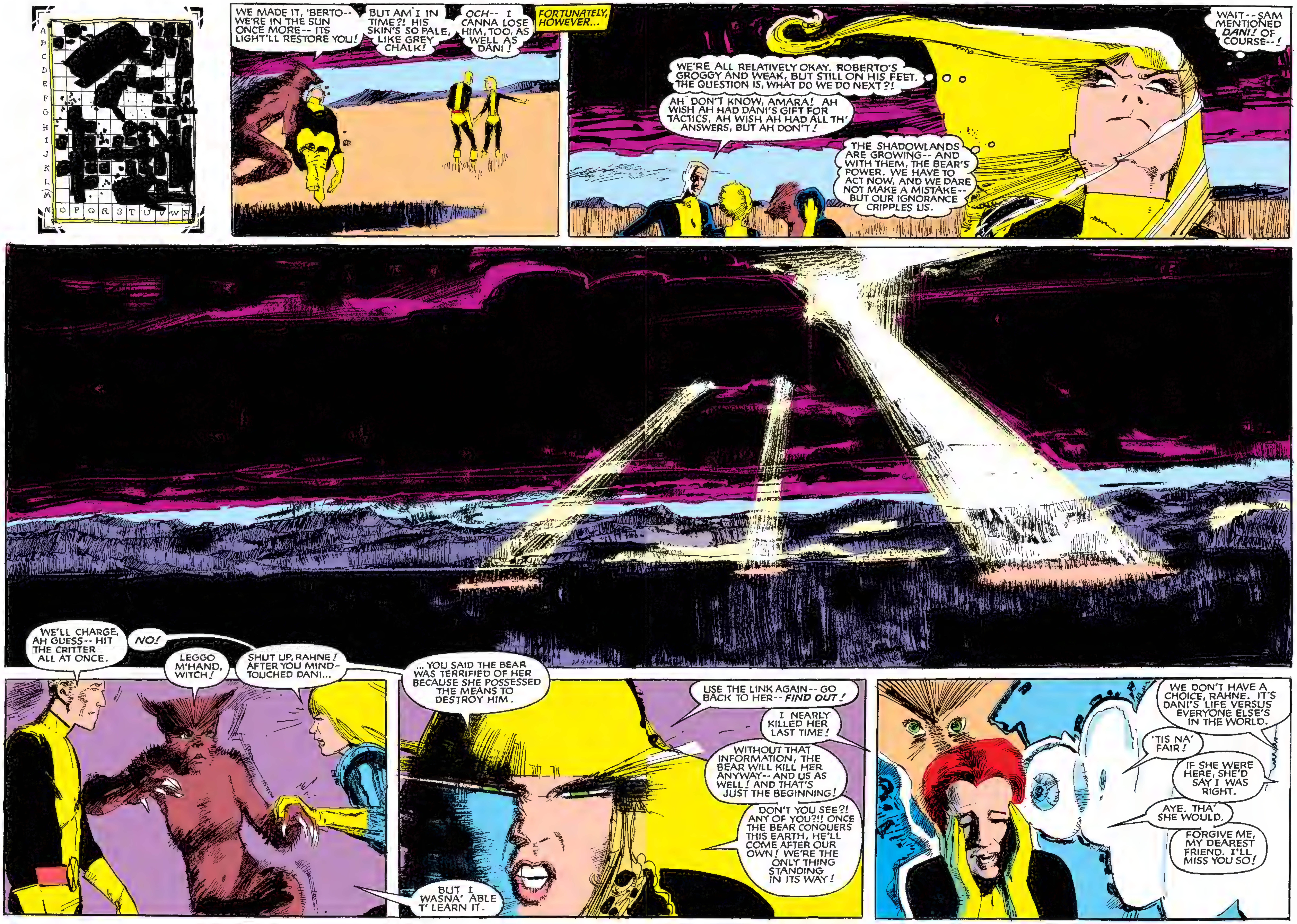

WORSE...
... HE LACKS CANNONBALL'S INVULNERABILITY...
...AND ONLY MONTHS OF STRENUOUS CONDITIONING AND ACROBATIC TRAINING...
... SAVE HIM FROM SERIOUS-- MOST PROBABLY FATAL-- INJURY.
HE LANDS IN ONE OF THE BEAR'S SHADOW PATCHES, AN AREA OF ABSOLUTE DARKNESS, AS COLD AS THE BITTEREST WINTER NIGHT.
IMPOSSIBLY-- FOR JUST OUT OF REACH IS THE LIGHT AND WARMTH OF THE MID-DAY SUN--HE SEES STARS ABOVE HIM.
I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE. MY STRENGTH DERIVES FROM THE SUN.
WITHOUT ITS LIGHT TO REPLENISH--*
HE SCREAMS.
IN SURPRISE.
IN TERROR.
IN AGONY.
CAN'T-- BREAK LOOSE!
REVERTING TO NORMAL--! SHE-DEMON... DRAINING MY POWERS-- MY *LIFE!*
BLESSED MADONNA, HAVE MERCY--**HELP ME!**

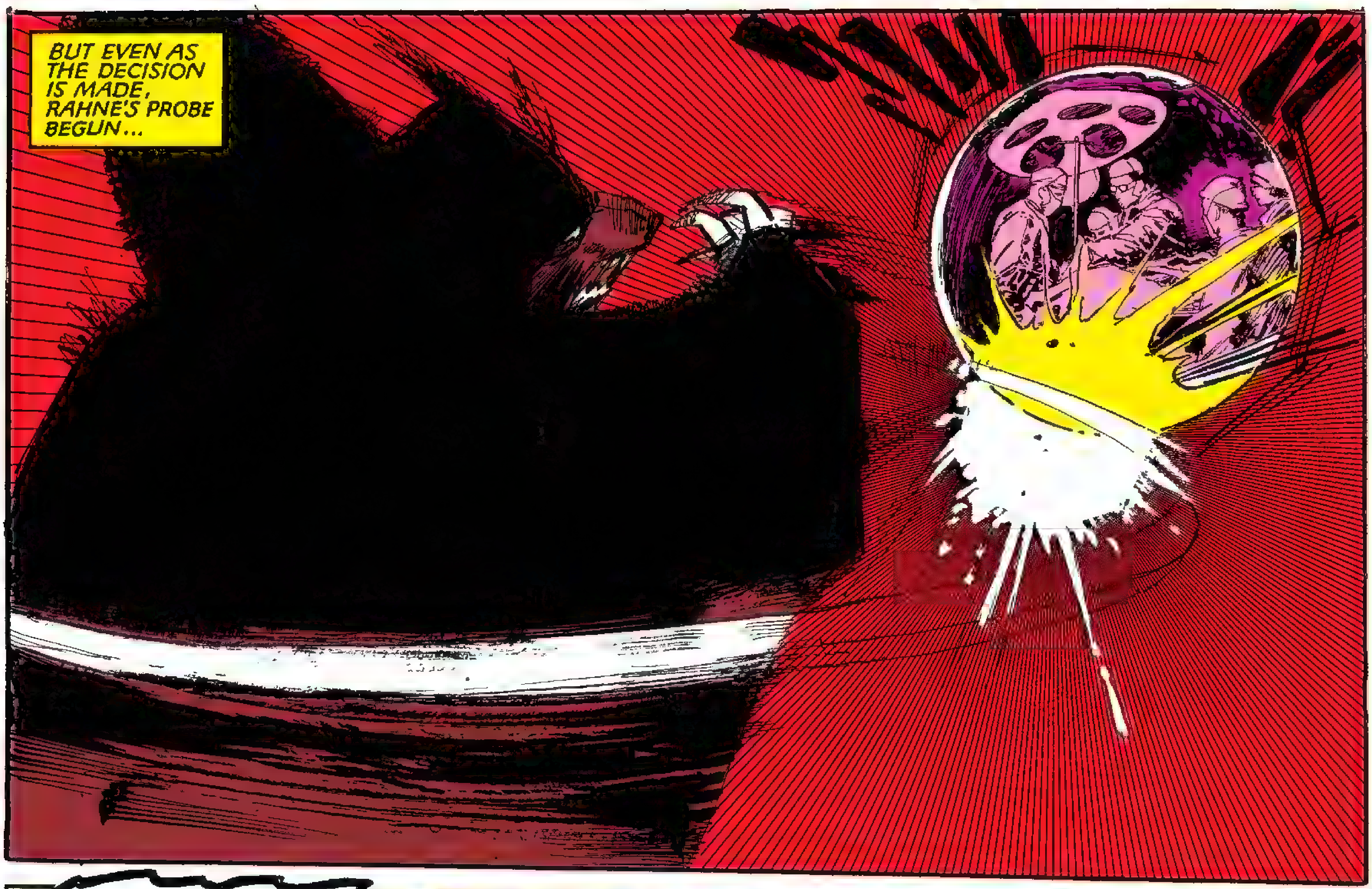

SALVATION COMES IN THE FORM OF A FEISTY, RUSSET-HUED SCOTS WERE-WOLF-- RAHNE SINCLAIR.
SHE GOES FOR THE DEMON'S THROAT...
...AND IS RELIEVED-- YET ALSO FURIOUS-- WHEN HER PREY TWISTS AWAY BEFORE SHE CAN DRAW BLOOD.
SHE FEELS STRANGELY... CHEATED.
A BOW APPEARS FROM NOWHERE-- THE DEMONS' MYRIAD WEAPONS AND ABILITIES CONJURED BY THEM AS AND WHEN NEEDED--
--BUT BEFORE AN ARROW CAN BE LOOSED INTO RAHNE'S HEART...
SHIFT TO HUMAN FORM, RAHNE!
GET ROBERTO OUT OF THESE SHADOWS!
LEAVE THE DEMON-- NNGNH!
AMARA FORGETS THERE ARE TWO OF THEM.
AND THAT THE BEAR...
...HAS THE POWER...

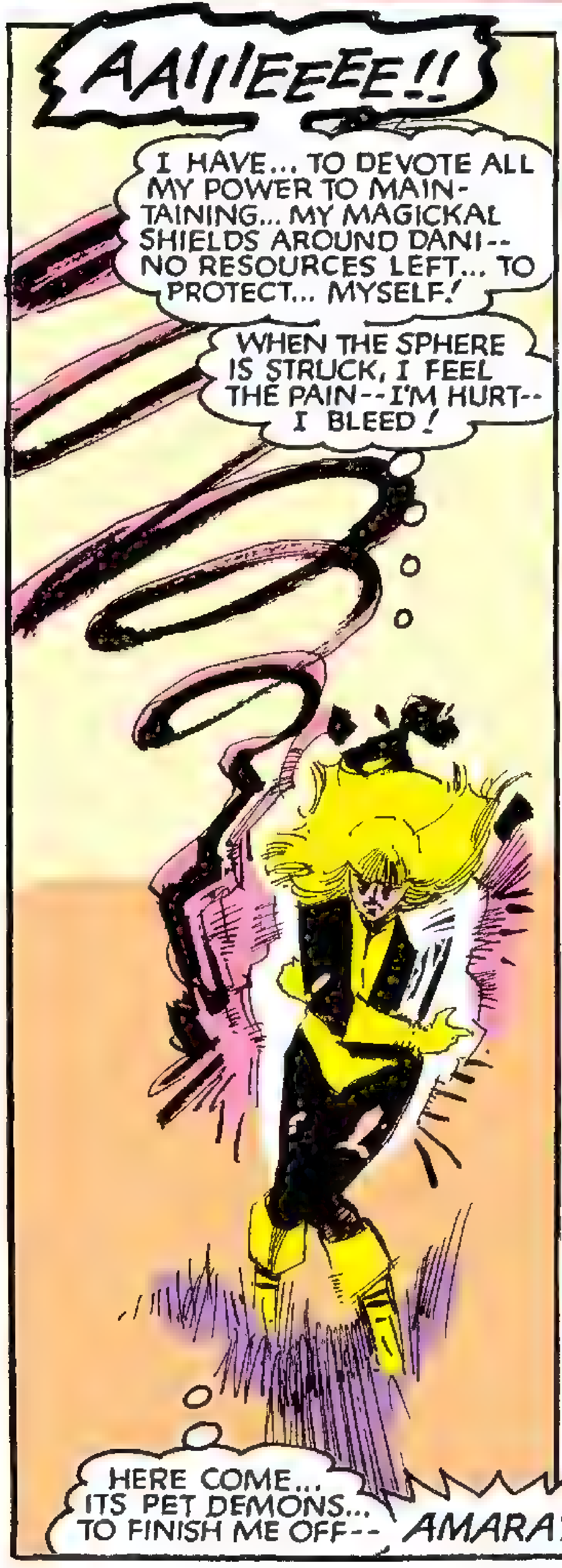
...TO CREATE MORE.
I COULDN'T SAVE THE OTHERS--BUT I WON'T FAIL AMARA!
I'LL HAVE TO GAMBLE THAT SUMMONING MY *SOULSWORD* WON'T SERIOUSLY CRIPPLE THE WARDS PROTECTING DANI.
AND MAKE SURE, AS WELL, THE BEAR DOESN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TEST THEM!

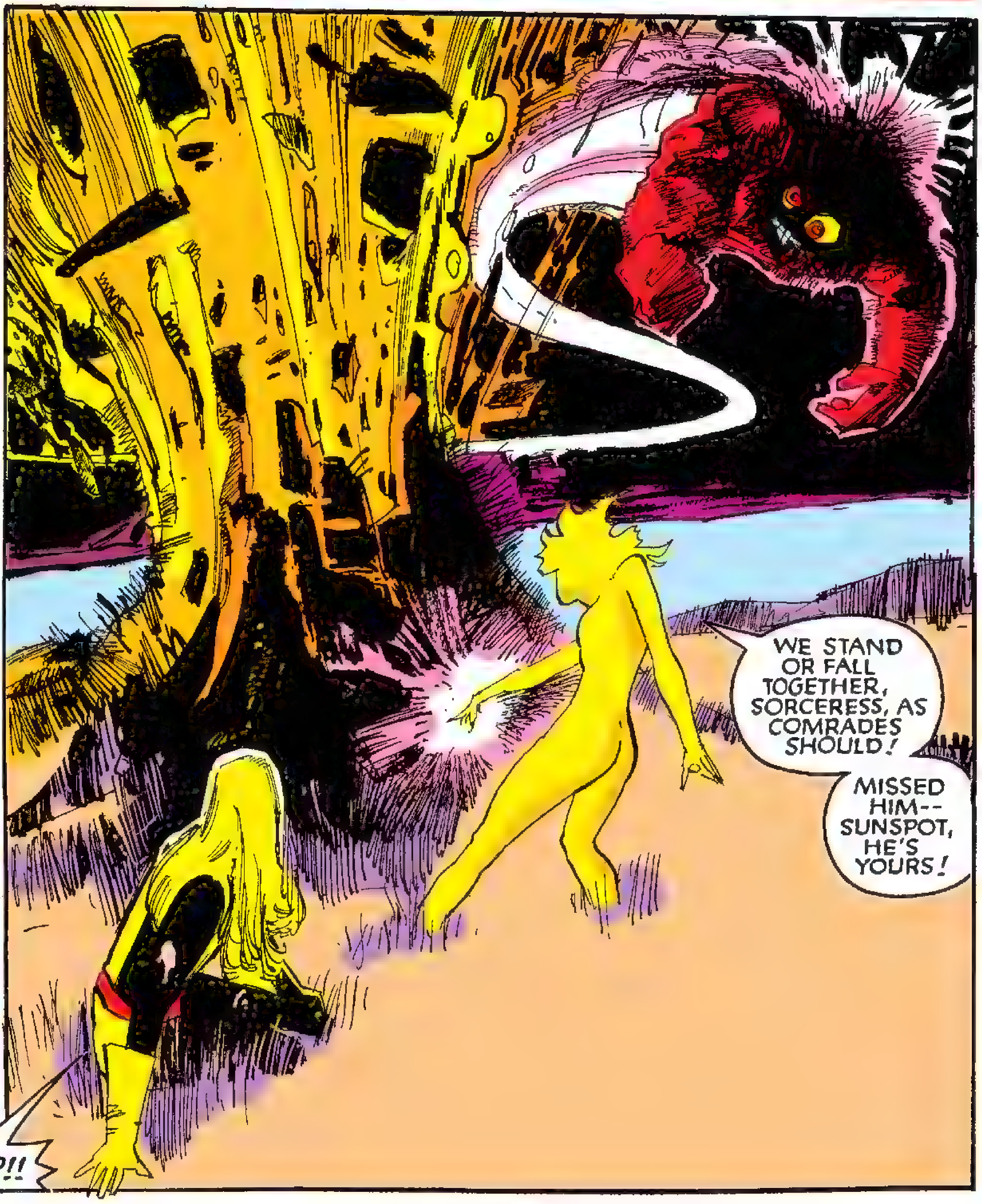
THE ELDRITCH BLADE IS PUREST SILVER, SO BRIGHT HUMAN EYES CAN'T ENDURE TO LOOK AT IT. IT IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF ILLYANA'S SORCEROUS POWER-- HER SOUL PERSONIFIED.
NO SPELL-- AND FEW MYSTIC BEINGS-- CAN ENDURE ITS TOUCH.
I'VE CRIPPLED THE MONSTER-- BUT NOT FOR LONG! ALREADY, I CAN SENSE IT DRAWING ENERGY FROM THE WORLD AROUND IT, THE PARTS IT'S TAINTED, TO RESTORE ITSELF.
BY THEN, THOUGH, MY WORK WILL BE DONE.
AND AMARA'S SOUL WILL BE FREE.
AMARA!!

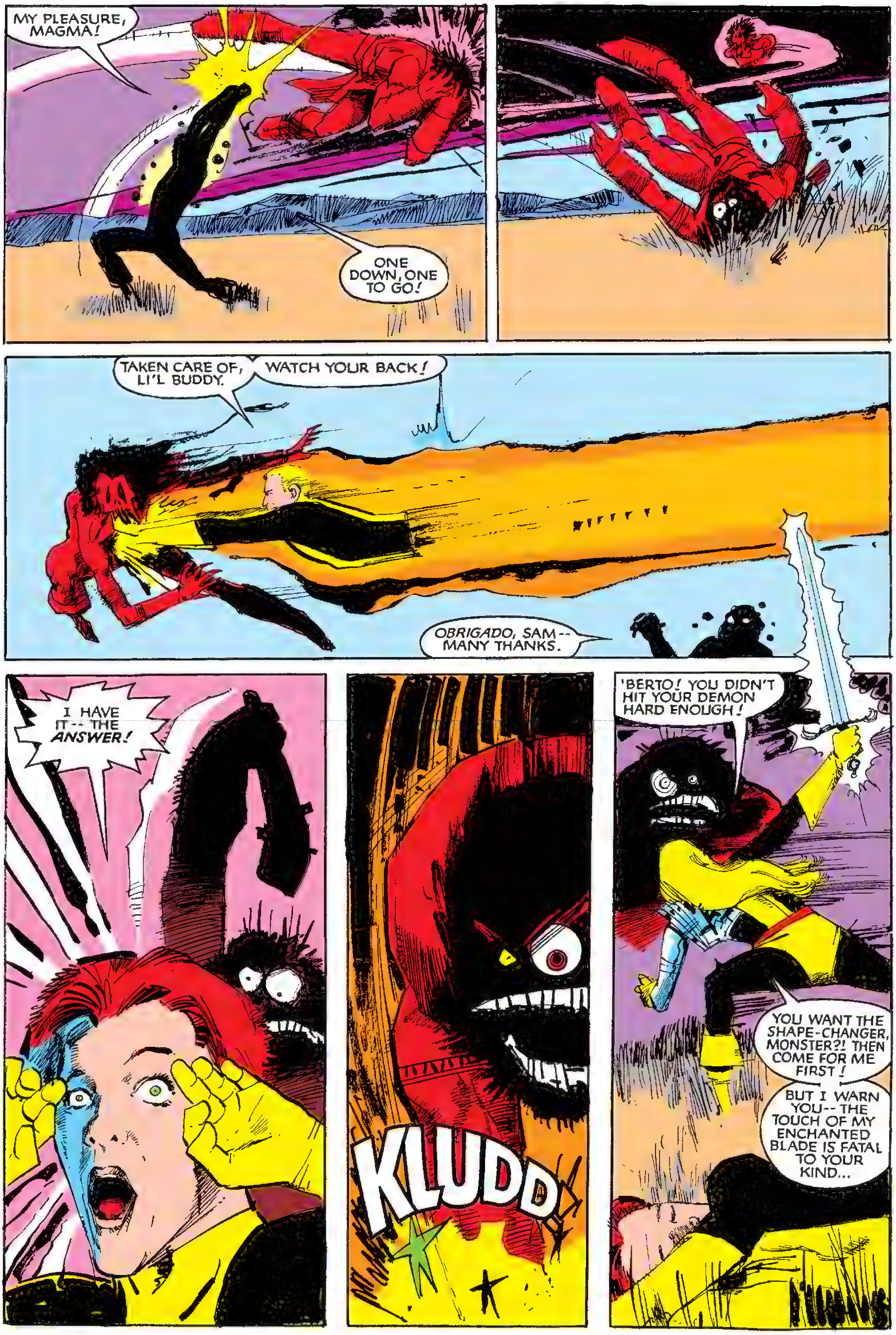
YOU KILLED HER!!
RAHNE HAD YOU PEGGED FROM THE START, WITCH-- LORD FORGIVE ME FOR NOT LIST'NIN' TO HER!
THE EVIL SIDE O' YOU TAKE OVER, GIRL?! YOU FIGURE THIS WAS THE TIME T' SHOW YOUR TRUE COLORS--T' JOIN UP WITH YOUR OWN KIND?!!
SAM'S POWER... PROTECTS WHOMEVER ...HE'S HOLDING, LIKE IT DOES... HIMSELF.
BUT... HE LET ME GO!
DUMMY... LOVES AMARA--NEVER GAVE ME... CHANCE TO... EXPLAIN...
MY COSTUME-- TORN TO RIBBONS--
--REVEALING... ARMOR!
IT SAVED MY LIFE-- BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM?!!
GUTHRIE!
HUH?!?
BARBARIAN FOOL, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
AMARA-- BUT AH SAW...
...ILLYANA STAB YOU!
SHE WAS SAVING ME, IDIOT! THE BEAR WAS POSSESSING ME--ENSLAVING MY SOUL--UNTIL ILLYANA USED HER SWORD TO EXORCISE THE BEAST'S EVIL! YOU'D HAVE SEEN IT, SAM, HAD YOU PAUSED--AND THOUGHT--BEFORE YOU ACTED! INSTEAD, YOU DID THE BEAR'S WORK FOR IT!
BEHIND THEM, THE BEAR STRETCHES ITS SHADOW TO THE HORIZON...
...AND ROARS IN TRIUMPH.

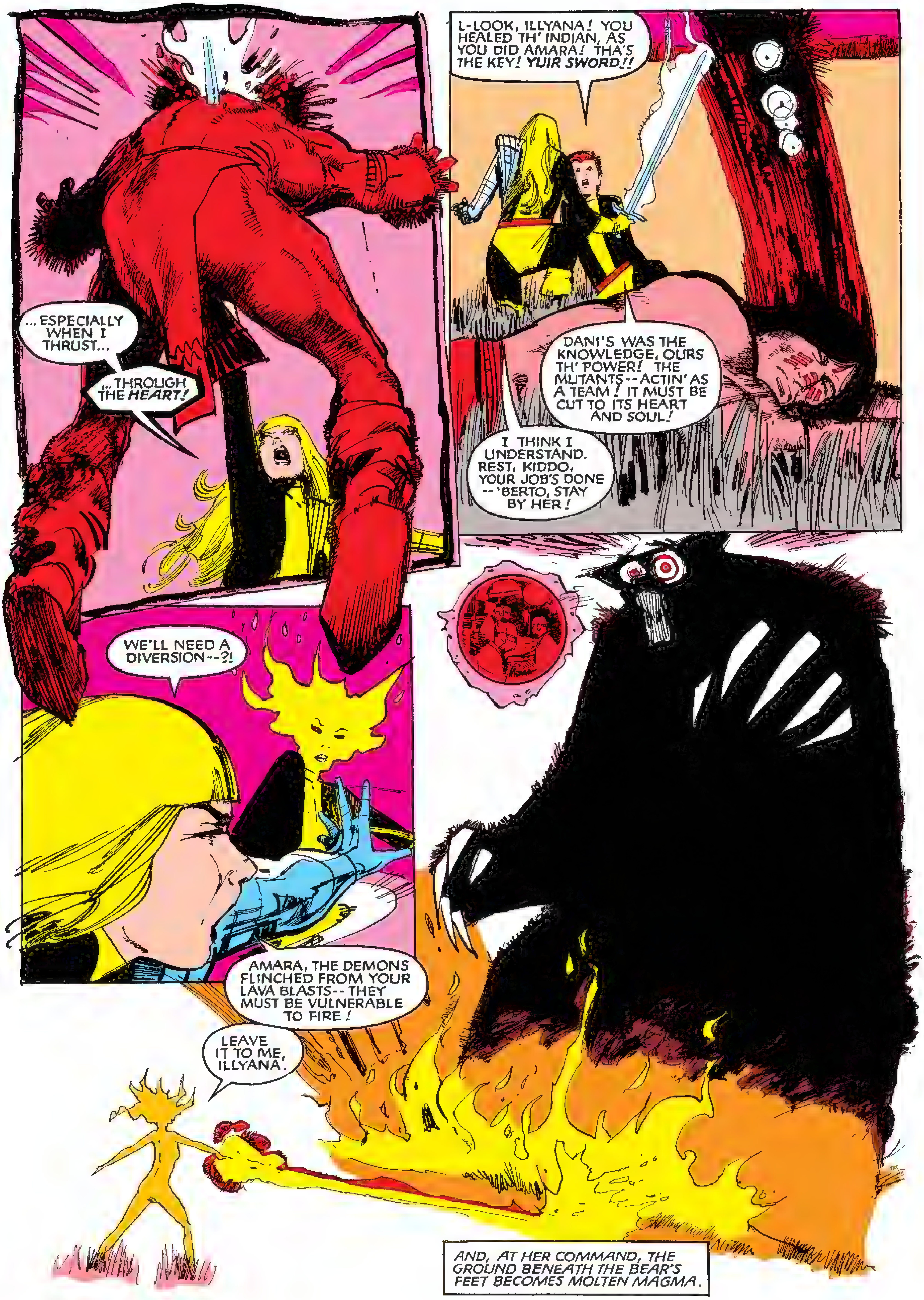

WE MADE IT, 'BERTO-- WE'RE IN THE SUN ONCE MORE-- ITS LIGHT'LL RESTORE YOU!
BUT AM I IN TIME?! HIS SKIN'S SO PALE, LIKE GREY CHALK!
*OCH*-- I CANNA LOSE HIM, TOO, AS WELL AS DANI!
*FORTUNATELY, HOWEVER...*
WE'RE ALL RELATIVELY OKAY. ROBERTO'S GROGGY AND WEAK, BUT STILL ON HIS FEET. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?!
AH DON'T KNOW, AMARA! AH WISH AH HAD DANI'S GIFT FOR TACTICS, AH WISH AH HAD ALL TH' ANSWERS, BUT AH DON'T!
THE SHADOWLANDS ARE GROWING-- AND WITH THEM, THE BEAR'S POWER. WE HAVE TO ACT NOW, AND WE DARE NOT MAKE A MISTAKE-- BUT OUR IGNORANCE CRIPPLES US.
WAIT--SAM MENTIONED *DANI!* OF COURSE--!
WE'LL CHARGE, AH GUESS-- HIT THE CRITTER ALL AT ONCE.
*NO!*
LEGGO M'HAND, WITCH!
SHUT UP, RAHNE! AFTER YOU MIND-TOUCHED DANI...
...YOU SAID THE BEAR WAS TERRIFIED OF HER BECAUSE SHE POSSESSED THE MEANS TO DESTROY HIM.
BUT I WASNA' ABLE T' LEARN IT.
USE THE LINK AGAIN-- GO BACK TO HER-- *FIND OUT!*
I NEARLY KILLED HER LAST TIME!
WITHOUT THAT INFORMATION, THE BEAR WILL KILL HER ANYWAY-- AND US AS WELL! AND THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING!
DON'T YOU SEE?! ANY OF YOU?!! ONCE THE BEAR CONQUERS THIS EARTH, HE'LL COME AFTER OUR OWN! WE'RE THE ONLY THING STANDING IN ITS WAY!
WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE, RAHNE. IT'S DANI'S LIFE VERSUS EVERYONE ELSE'S IN THE WORLD.
'TIS NA' FAIR!
IF SHE WERE HERE, SHE'D SAY I WAS RIGHT.
AYE. THA' SHE WOULD.
FORGIVE ME, MY DEAREST FRIEND. I'LL MISS YOU SO!


BUT EVEN AS THE DECISION IS MADE, RAHNE'S PROBE BEGUN...


AAIIIEEEE!!
I HAVE... TO DEVOTE ALL MY POWER TO MAINTAINING... MY MAGICKAL SHIELDS AROUND DANI-- NO RESOURCES LEFT... TO PROTECT... MYSELF!
WHEN THE SPHERE IS STRUCK, I FEEL THE PAIN--I'M HURT-- I BLEED!
HERE COME... ITS PET DEMONS... TO FINISH ME OFF--

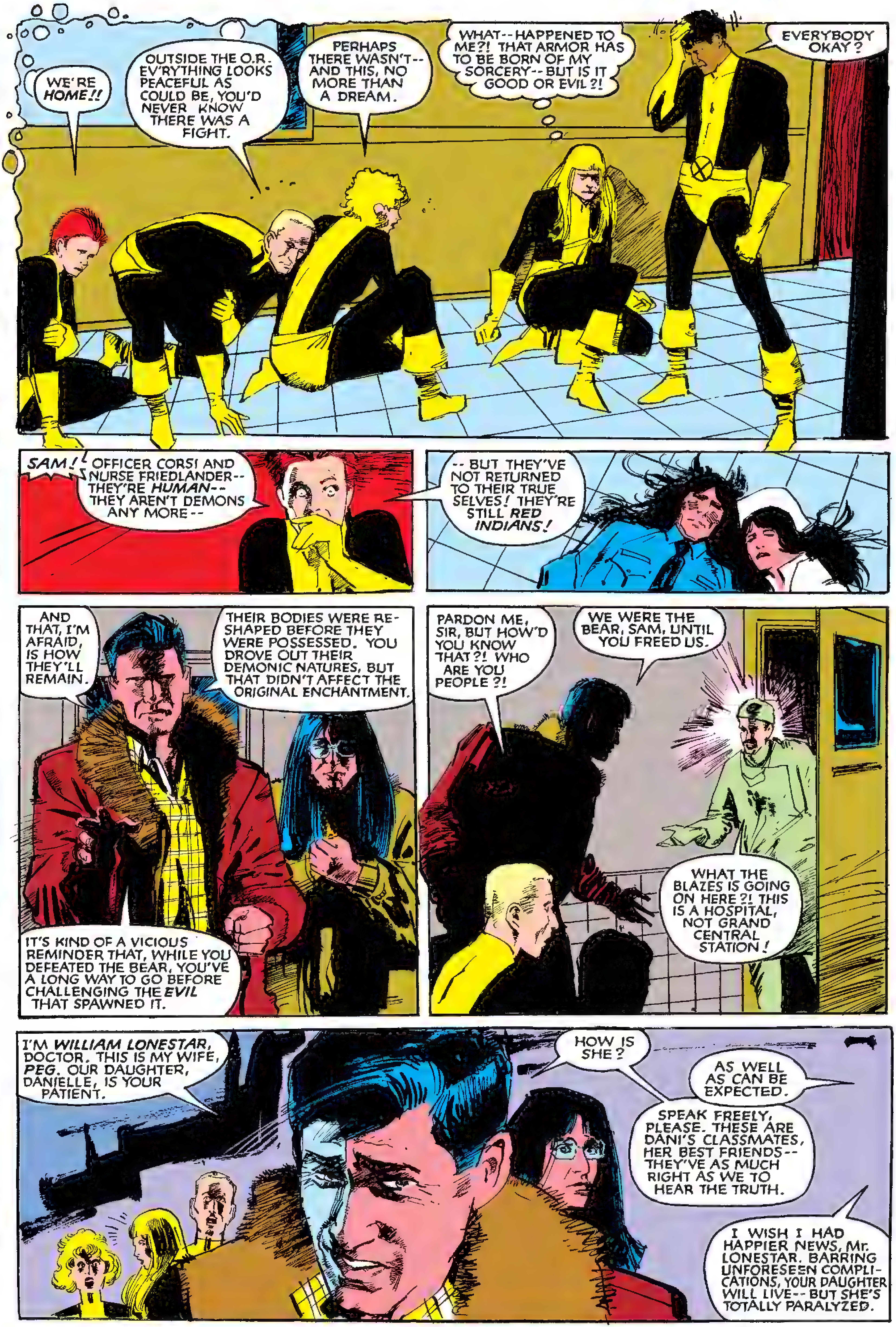

AMARA?!!
WE STAND OR FALL TOGETHER, SORCERESS, AS COMRADES SHOULD!
MISSED HIM-- SUNSPOT, HE'S YOURS!

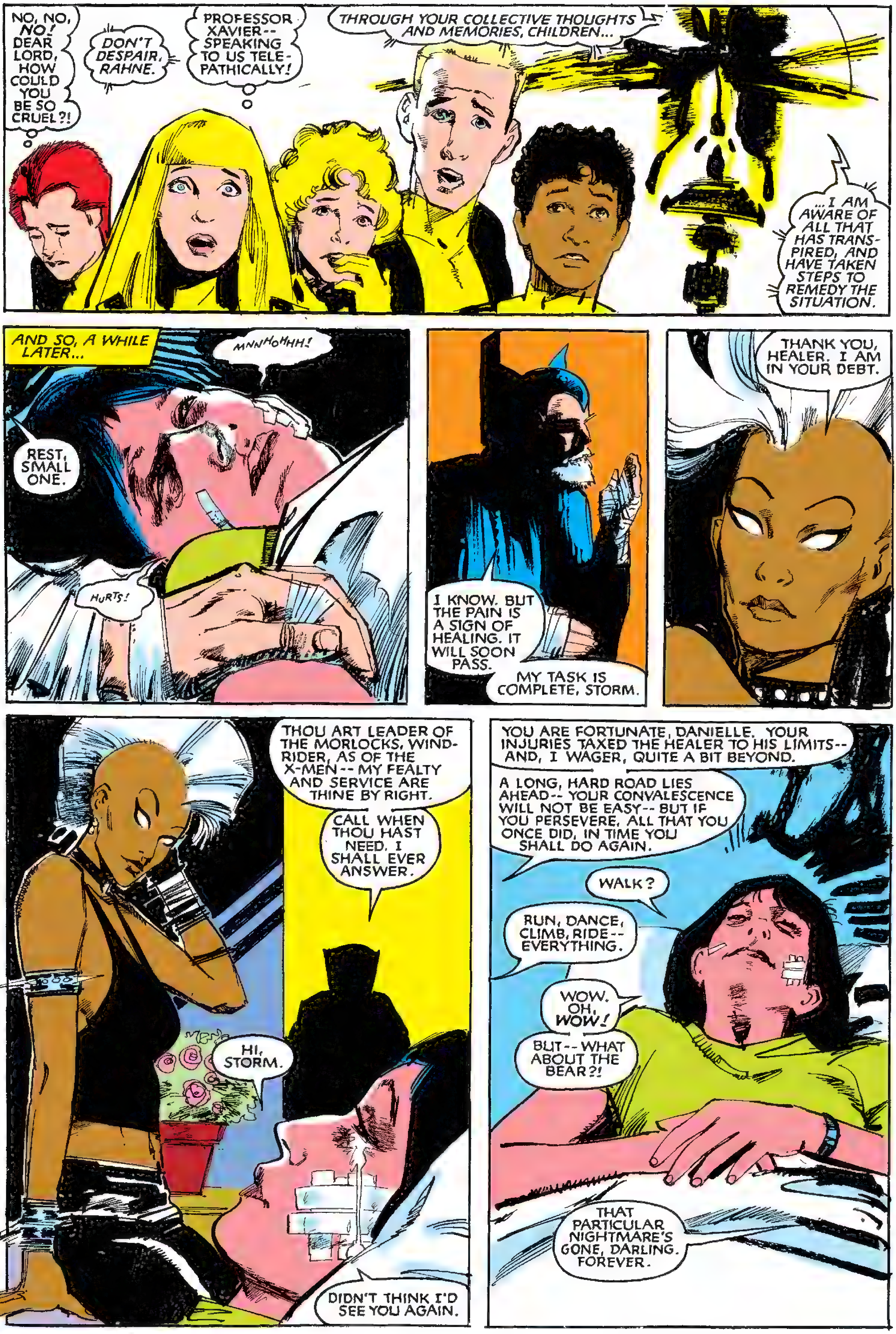

MY PLEASURE, MAGMA!
ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO!
TAKEN CARE OF, LI'L BUDDY.
WATCH YOUR BACK!
OBRIGADO, SAM-- MANY THANKS.
I HAVE IT-- THE *ANSWER!*
KLUDD
'BERTO! YOU DIDN'T HIT YOUR DEMON HARD ENOUGH!
YOU WANT THE SHAPE-CHANGER, MONSTER?! THEN COME FOR ME FIRST!
BUT I WARN YOU-- THE TOUCH OF MY ENCHANTED BLADE IS FATAL TO YOUR KIND...

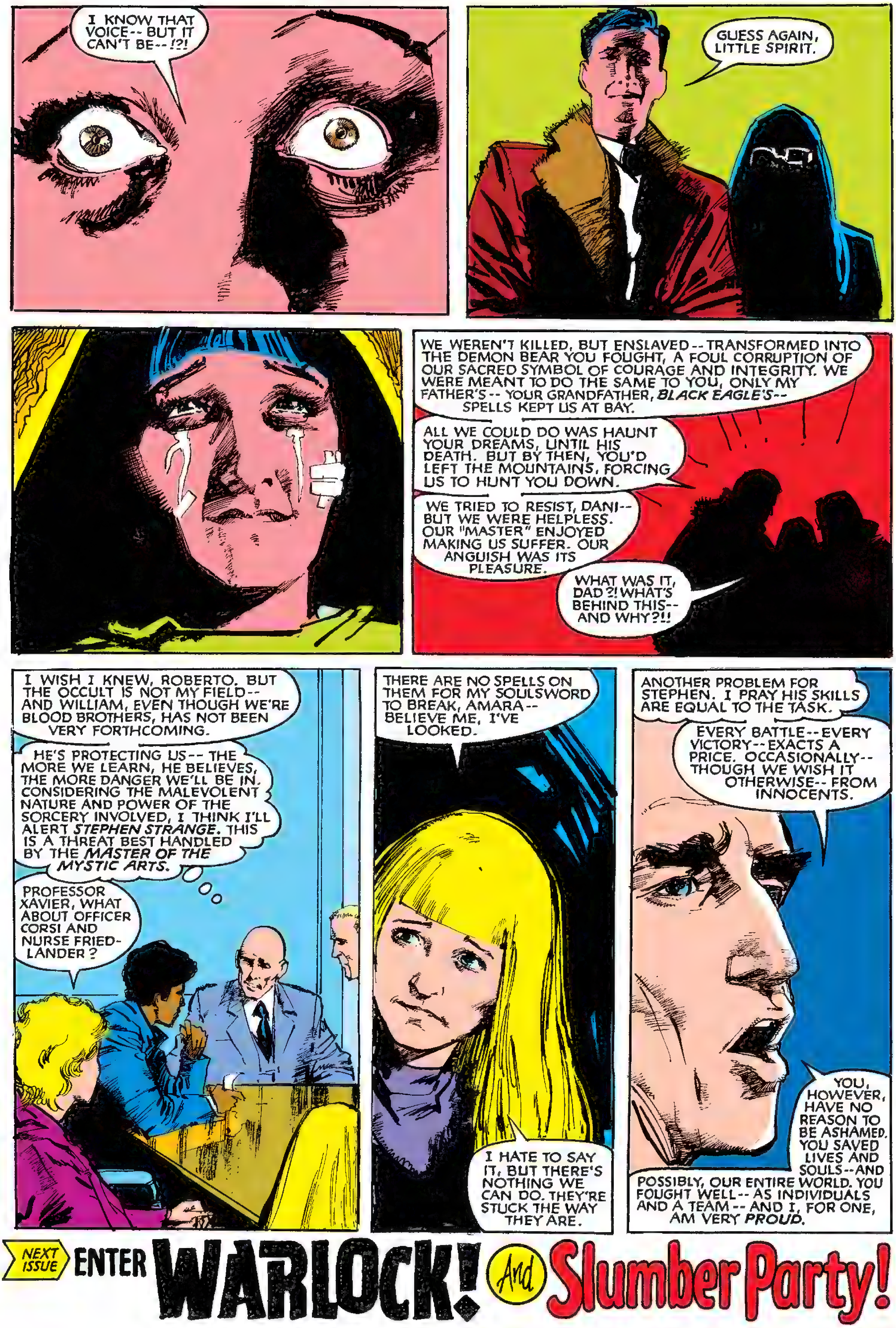

...ESPECIALLY WHEN I THRUST...
...THROUGH THE *HEART!*
L-LOOK, ILLYANA! YOU HEALED TH' INDIAN, AS YOU DID AMARA! THA'S THE KEY! ***YUIR SWORD!!***
DANI'S WAS THE KNOWLEDGE, OURS TH' POWER! THE MUTANTS--ACTIN' AS A TEAM! IT MUST BE CUT TO ITS HEART AND SOUL!
I THINK I UNDERSTAND. REST, KIDDO, YOUR JOB'S DONE -- 'BERTO, STAY BY HER!
WE'LL NEED A DIVERSION--?!
AMARA, THE DEMONS FLINCHED FROM YOUR LAVA BLASTS-- THEY MUST BE VULNERABLE TO FIRE!
LEAVE IT TO ME, ILLYANA.
*AND, AT HER COMMAND, THE GROUND BENEATH THE BEAR'S FEET BECOMES MOLTEN MAGMA.*

HE'S RUNNING, SAM! AFTER HIM, BEFORE HE HEALS HIMSELF!
WHADDYA HAVE IN MIND, GIRL -- HOW'RE YOU GONNA BEAT HIM?!
THE OLD FASHIONED WAY, OF COURSE.
VERY FUNNY.
HEY, PAL, IF YOU CAN'T LAUGH IN THE FACE OF DEATH, WHEN ELSE?!
AT THE LAST, THEIR EYES MEET-- HERS AND THE BEAR'S--
--AND SHE HESITATES.
THE BEAR DWARFS HER TO THE POINT OF INSIGNIFICANCE, ITS DAEMONIC NATURE KIN TO THE EVIL WITHIN HER OWN SOUL. IT IS AS ANCIENT AS THE PLANET-- A MALEFICENCE THAT HAS EVER BEEN, SHALL EVER BE...
... WHILE ILLYANA, FOR ALL HER DREAD POWER, IS STILL VERY MUCH A CHILD. WHAT HOPE HAS SHE TO EVEN MATCH HER FOE, MUCH LESS OVERCOME IT?
THEN, WITH A CRY TORN FROM THE CORE OF HER BEING-- SOULSWORD RADIATING SO MUCH RAW ENERGY IT TURNS NIGHT TO DAY-- SHE SPLITS THE MONSTER'S SKULL!

IT HOWLS!
AND THE WORLD SHRIEKS IN SYMPATHETIC TORMENT, BEFORE SEEMINGLY SHREDDING APART-- AS THE BEAR'S TAINT IS SUMMARILY BANISHED.
IMAGES CASCADE PAST AND THROUGH THE MUTANTS-- THE BEAR'S SHADOW VANISHING FROM THE LAND WHILE ITS SERVANTS REGAIN THEIR LOST HUMANITY.
ITS SEVERED HALVES COLLAPSE IN ON THEMSELVES, REVEALING THAT THE BEAR, FOR ALL ITS DARKSOME MAJESTY, WAS NOT QUITE WHAT IT FIRST SEEMED.
AND THEN...


WE'RE *HOME!!*
OUTSIDE THE O.R. EV'RYTHING LOOKS PEACEFUL AS COULD BE, YOU'D NEVER KNOW THERE WAS A FIGHT.
PERHAPS THERE WASN'T-- AND THIS, NO MORE THAN A DREAM.
WHAT--HAPPENED TO ME?! THAT ARMOR HAS TO BE BORN OF MY SORCERY--BUT IS IT GOOD OR EVIL?!
EVERYBODY OKAY?
*SAM!*
OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER-- THEY'RE *HUMAN*-- THEY AREN'T DEMONS ANY MORE--
-- BUT THEY'VE NOT RETURNED TO THEIR TRUE SELVES! THEY'RE STILL *RED INDIANS!*
AND THAT, I'M AFRAID, IS HOW THEY'LL REMAIN.
THEIR BODIES WERE RE-SHAPED BEFORE THEY WERE POSSESSED. YOU DROVE OUT THEIR DEMONIC NATURES, BUT THAT DIDN'T AFFECT THE ORIGINAL ENCHANTMENT.
IT'S KIND OF A VICIOUS REMINDER THAT, WHILE YOU DEFEATED THE BEAR, YOU'VE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE CHALLENGING THE *EVIL* THAT SPAWNED IT.
PARDON ME, SIR, BUT HOW'D YOU KNOW THAT?! WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!
WE WERE THE BEAR, SAM, UNTIL YOU FREED US.
WHAT THE BLAZES IS GOING ON HERE?! THIS IS A HOSPITAL, NOT GRAND CENTRAL STATION!
I'M *WILLIAM LONESTAR*, DOCTOR. THIS IS MY WIFE, *PEG*. OUR DAUGHTER, DANIELLE, IS YOUR PATIENT.
HOW IS SHE?
AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED.
SPEAK FREELY, PLEASE. THESE ARE DANI'S CLASSMATES, HER BEST FRIENDS-- THEY'VE AS MUCH RIGHT AS WE TO HEAR THE TRUTH.
I WISH I HAD HAPPIER NEWS, Mr. LONESTAR. BARRING UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS, YOUR DAUGHTER WILL LIVE-- BUT SHE'S TOTALLY PARALYZED.


NO, NO, NO! DEAR LORD, HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL?!
DON'T DESPAIR, RAHNE.
PROFESSOR XAVIER-- SPEAKING TO US TELEPATHICALLY!
THROUGH YOUR COLLECTIVE THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES, CHILDREN...
...I AM AWARE OF ALL THAT HAS TRANSPIRED, AND HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO REMEDY THE SITUATION.
AND SO, A WHILE LATER...
MNNHOHHH!
REST, SMALL ONE.
HURTS!
I KNOW. BUT THE PAIN IS A SIGN OF HEALING. IT WILL SOON PASS.
MY TASK IS COMPLETE, STORM.
THANK YOU, HEALER. I AM IN YOUR DEBT.
THOU ART LEADER OF THE MORLOCKS, WIND-RIDER, AS OF THE X-MEN -- MY FEALTY AND SERVICE ARE THINE BY RIGHT.
CALL WHEN THOU HAST NEED. I SHALL EVER ANSWER.
HI, STORM.
DIDN'T THINK I'D SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU ARE FORTUNATE, DANIELLE. YOUR INJURIES TAXED THE HEALER TO HIS LIMITS-- AND, I WAGER, QUITE A BIT BEYOND.
A LONG, HARD ROAD LIES AHEAD-- YOUR CONVALESCENCE WILL NOT BE EASY-- BUT IF YOU PERSEVERE, ALL THAT YOU ONCE DID, IN TIME YOU SHALL DO AGAIN.
WALK?
RUN, DANCE, CLIMB, RIDE-- EVERYTHING.
WOW. OH, WOW!
BUT--WHAT ABOUT THE BEAR?!
THAT PARTICULAR NIGHTMARE'S GONE, DARLING. FOREVER.


I KNOW THAT VOICE-- BUT IT CAN'T BE--!?!
GUESS AGAIN, LITTLE SPIRIT.
WE WEREN'T KILLED, BUT ENSLAVED--TRANSFORMED INTO THE DEMON BEAR YOU FOUGHT, A FOUL CORRUPTION OF OUR SACRED SYMBOL OF COURAGE AND INTEGRITY. WE WERE MEANT TO DO THE SAME TO YOU, ONLY MY FATHER'S-- YOUR GRANDFATHER, *BLACK EAGLE'S*-- SPELLS KEPT US AT BAY.
ALL WE COULD DO WAS HAUNT YOUR DREAMS, UNTIL HIS DEATH. BUT BY THEN, YOU'D LEFT THE MOUNTAINS, FORCING US TO HUNT YOU DOWN.
WE TRIED TO RESIST, DANI-- BUT WE WERE HELPLESS. OUR "MASTER" ENJOYED MAKING US SUFFER. OUR ANGUISH WAS ITS PLEASURE.
WHAT WAS IT, DAD?! WHAT'S BEHIND THIS-- AND WHY?!!
I WISH I KNEW, ROBERTO. BUT THE OCCULT IS NOT MY FIELD-- AND WILLIAM, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE BLOOD BROTHERS, HAS NOT BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING.
HE'S PROTECTING US-- THE MORE WE LEARN, HE BELIEVES, THE MORE DANGER WE'LL BE IN. CONSIDERING THE MALEVOLENT NATURE AND POWER OF THE SORCERY INVOLVED, I THINK I'LL ALERT *STEPHEN STRANGE*. THIS IS A THREAT BEST HANDLED BY THE *MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS*.
PROFESSOR XAVIER, WHAT ABOUT OFFICER CORSI AND NURSE FRIEDLANDER?
THERE ARE NO SPELLS ON THEM FOR MY SOULSWORD TO BREAK, AMARA-- BELIEVE ME, I'VE LOOKED.
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO. THEY'RE STUCK THE WAY THEY ARE.
ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR STEPHEN. I PRAY HIS SKILLS ARE EQUAL TO THE TASK.
EVERY BATTLE--EVERY VICTORY--EXACTS A PRICE. OCCASIONALLY-- THOUGH WE WISH IT OTHERWISE-- FROM INNOCENTS.
YOU, HOWEVER, HAVE NO REASON TO BE ASHAMED. YOU SAVED LIVES AND SOULS--AND POSSIBLY, OUR ENTIRE WORLD. YOU FOUGHT WELL-- AS INDIVIDUALS AND A TEAM-- AND I, FOR ONE, AM VERY *PROUD*.
NEXT ISSUE
ENTER WARLOCK! And Slumber Party!

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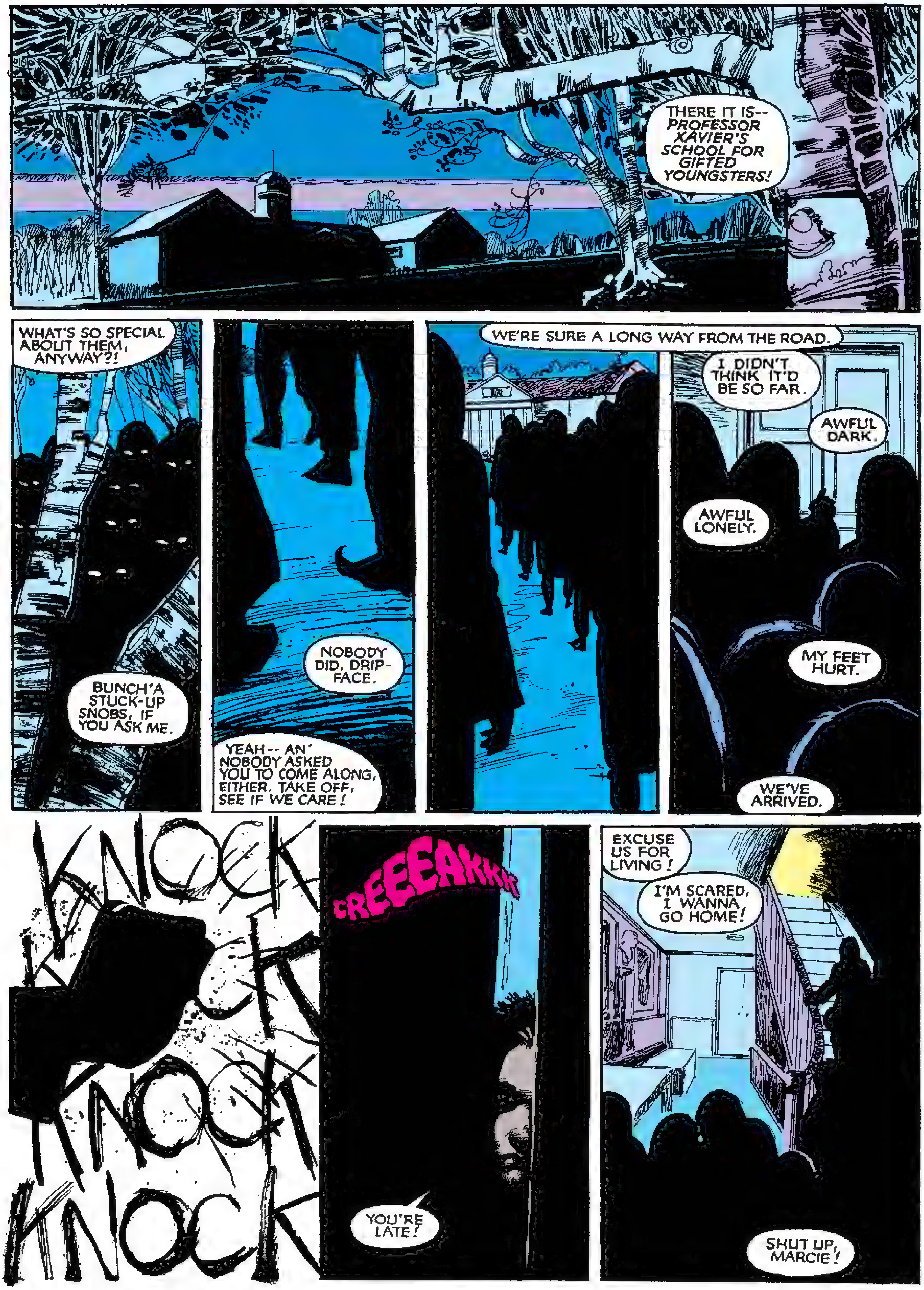
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
a deadly double-sized issue
THE NEW MUTANTS™
SLUMBER PARTY


THERE IT IS-- PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS!
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THEM, ANYWAY?!
BUNCH'A STUCK-UP SNOBS, IF YOU ASK ME.
NOBODY DID, DRIP-FACE.
YEAH -- AN' NOBODY ASKED YOU TO COME ALONG, EITHER. TAKE OFF, SEE IF WE CARE!
WE'RE SURE A LONG WAY FROM THE ROAD.
I DIDN'T THINK IT'D BE SO FAR.
AWFUL DARK.
AWFUL LONELY.
MY FEET HURT.
WE'VE ARRIVED.
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
CREEEAKKK
YOU'RE LATE!
EXCUSE US FOR LIVING!
I'M SCARED, I WANNA GO HOME!
SHUT UP, MARCIE!

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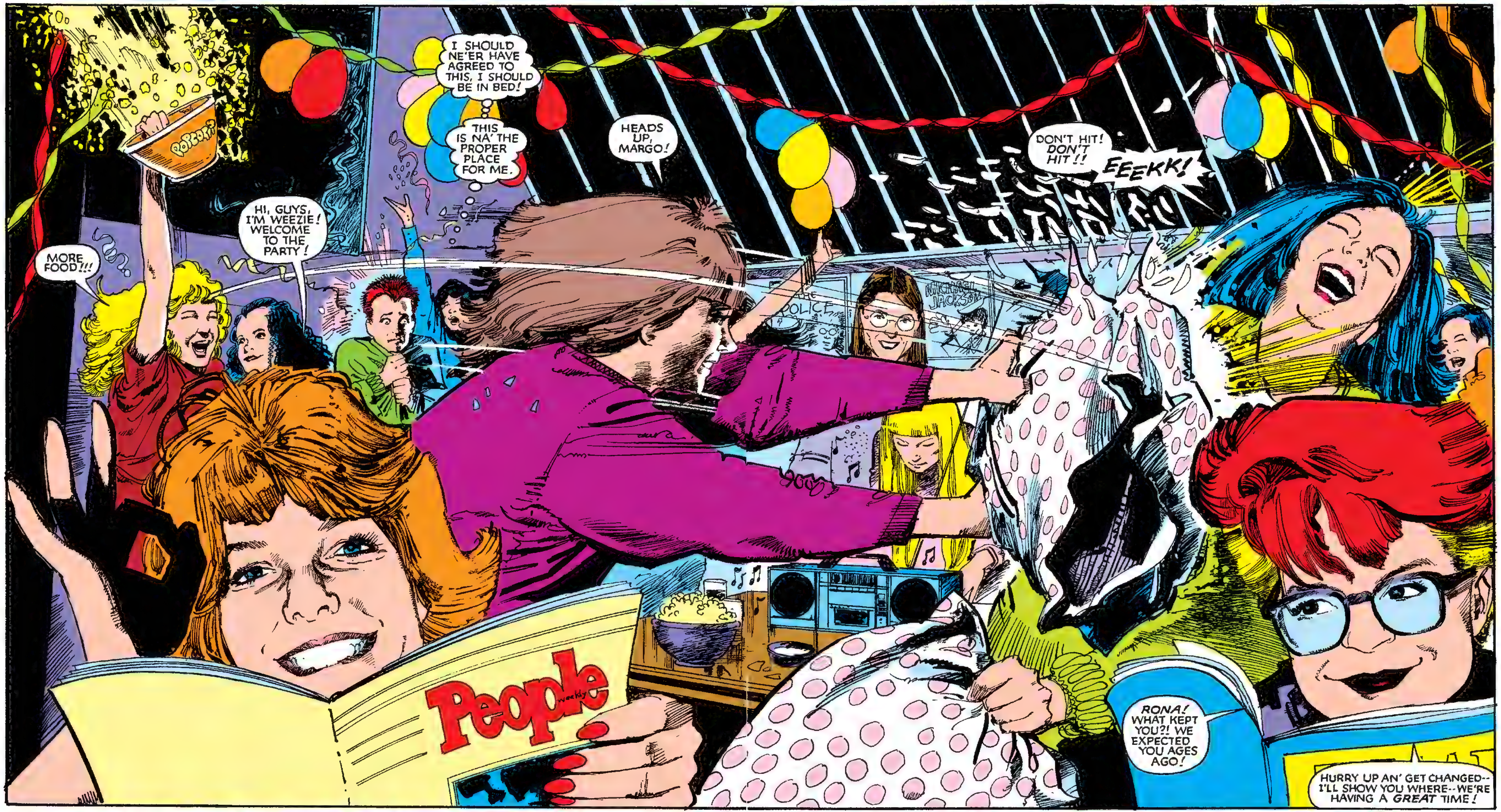
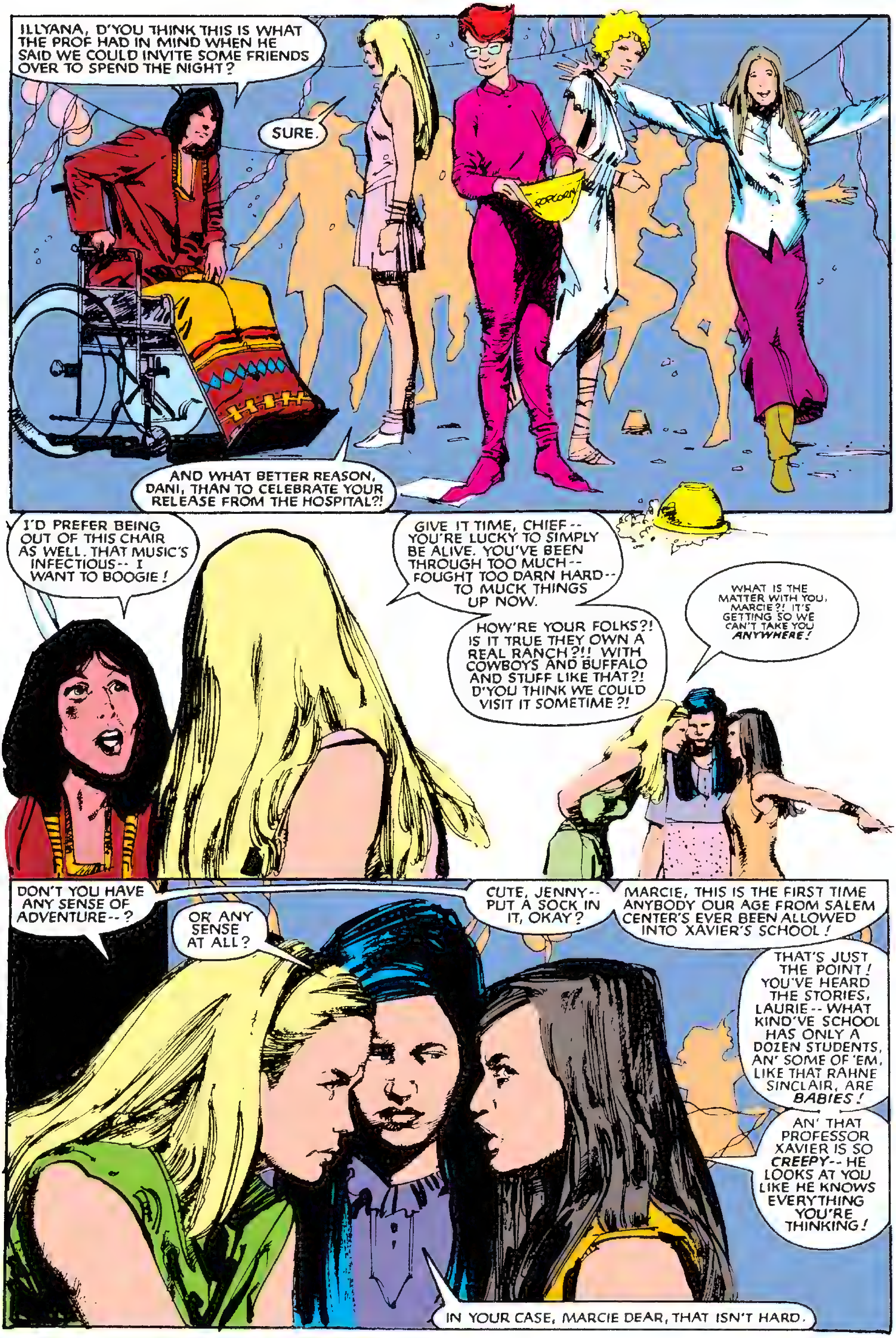
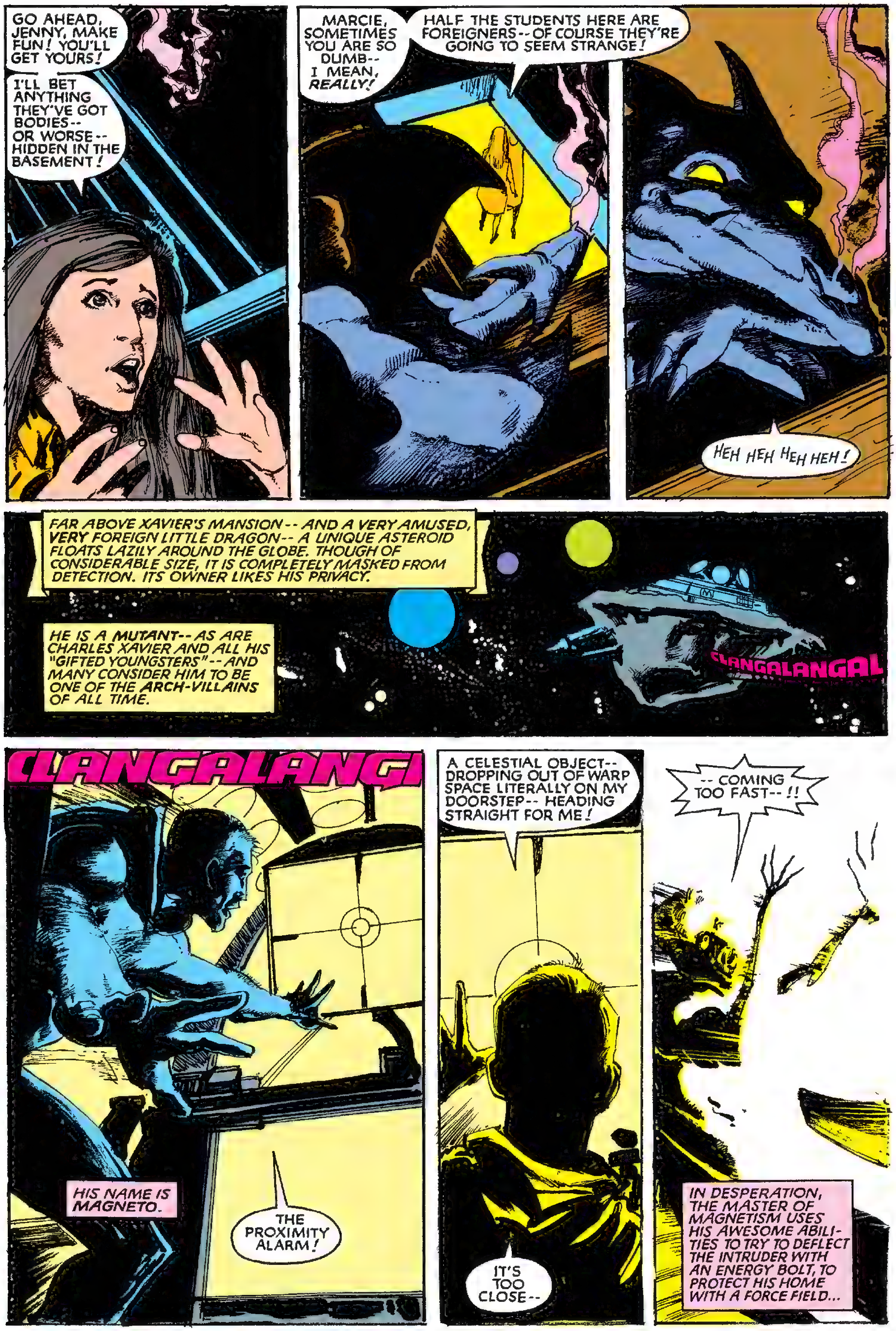
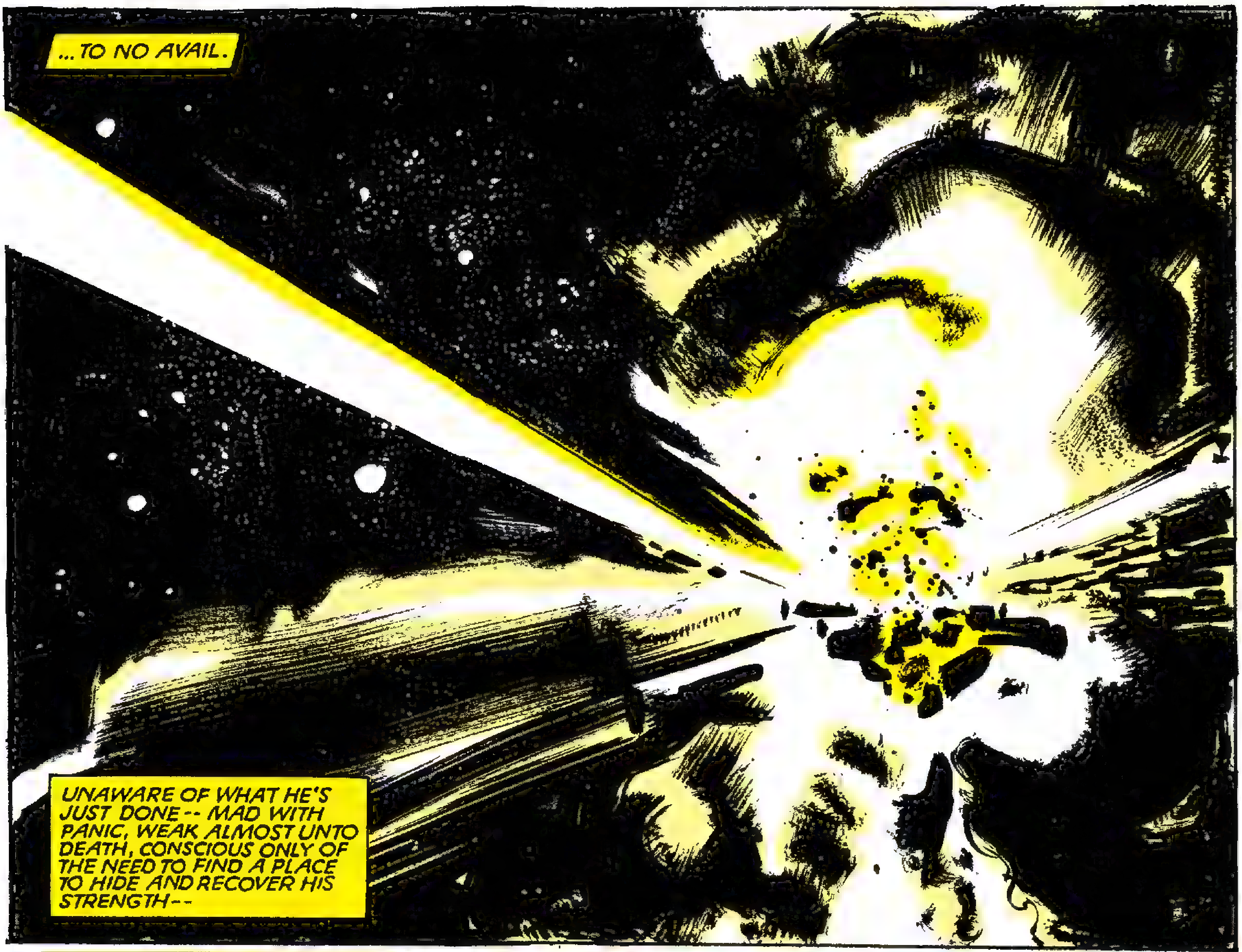
# THE NEW MUTANTS

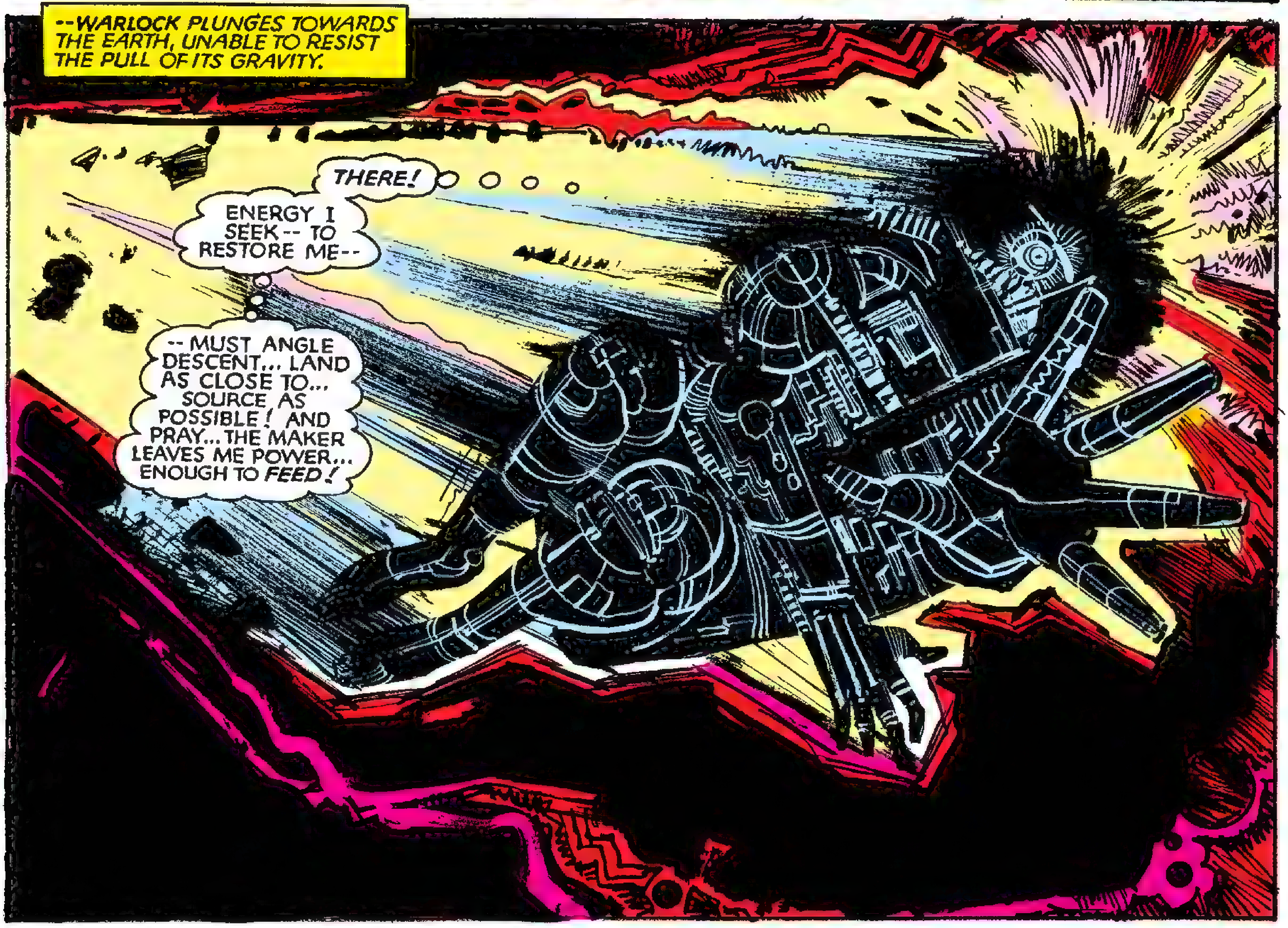

MORE FOOD!!!
POPCORN
HI, GUYS, I'M WEEZIE! WELCOME TO THE PARTY!
I SHOULD NE'ER HAVE AGREED TO THIS, I SHOULD BE IN BED!
THIS IS NA' THE PROPER PLACE FOR ME.
HEADS UP, MARGO!
POLICE
MICHAEL JACKSON
DON'T HIT! *DON'T HIT!!*
EEEKK!
People weekly
RONA! WHAT KEPT YOU?! WE EXPECTED YOU AGES AGO!
HURRY UP AN' GET CHANGED--I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE--WE'RE HAVING A *GREAT* TIME!

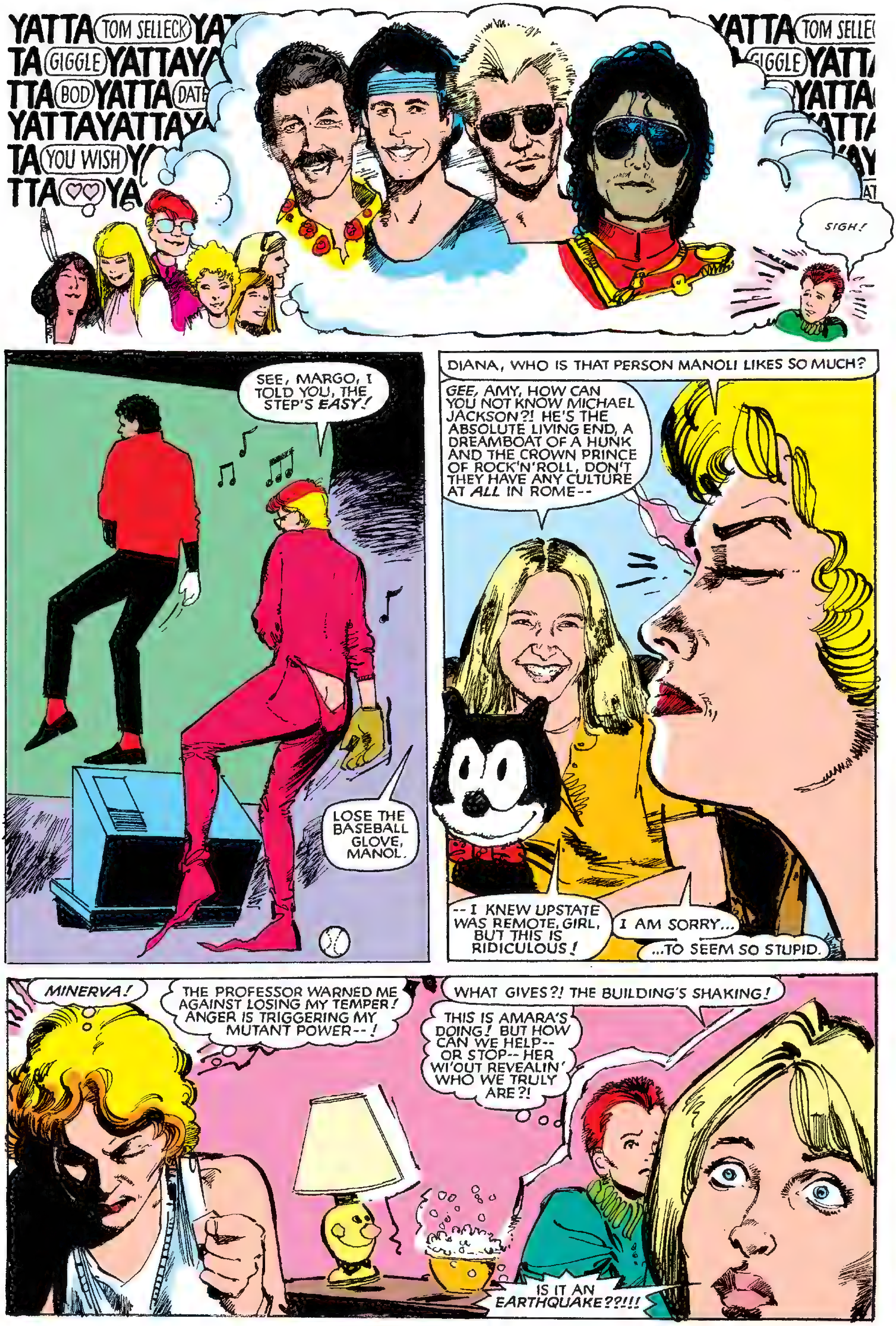
## SLUMBER PARTY!

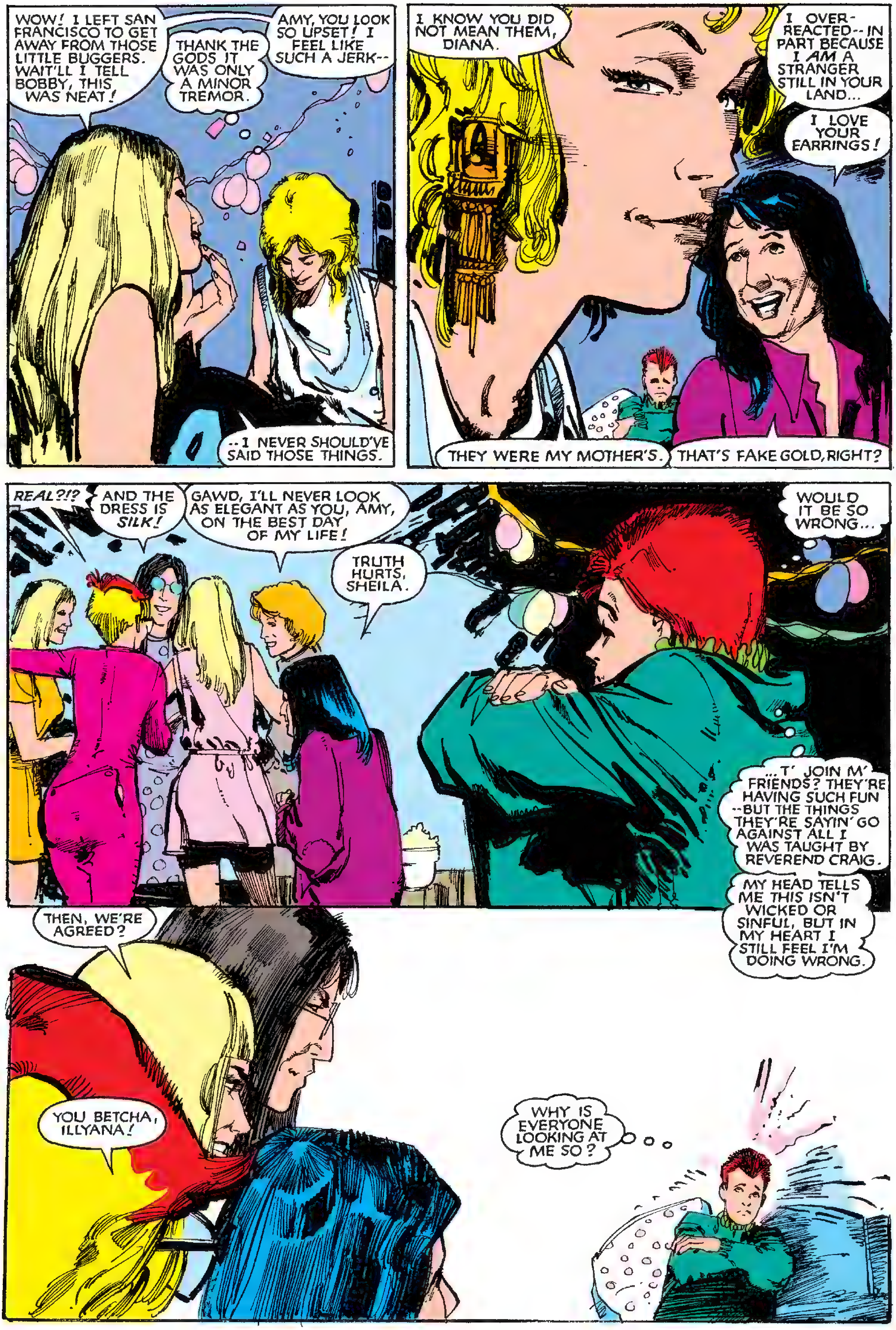

ILLYANA, D'YOU THINK THIS IS WHAT THE PROF HAD IN MIND WHEN HE SAID WE COULD INVITE SOME FRIENDS OVER TO SPEND THE NIGHT?
SURE.
POPCORN
AND WHAT BETTER REASON, DANI, THAN TO CELEBRATE YOUR RELEASE FROM THE HOSPITAL?!
I'D PREFER BEING OUT OF THIS CHAIR AS WELL. THAT MUSIC'S INFECTIOUS-- I WANT TO BOOGIE!
GIVE IT TIME, CHIEF-- YOU'RE LUCKY TO SIMPLY BE ALIVE. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH-- FOUGHT TOO DARN HARD-- TO MUCK THINGS UP NOW.
HOW'RE YOUR FOLKS?! IS IT TRUE THEY OWN A REAL RANCH?!! WITH COWBOYS AND BUFFALO AND STUFF LIKE THAT?! D'YOU THINK WE COULD VISIT IT SOMETIME?!
WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, MARCIE?! IT'S GETTING SO WE CAN'T TAKE YOU *ANYWHERE!*
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF ADVENTURE--?
OR ANY SENSE AT ALL?
CUTE, JENNY-- PUT A SOCK IN IT, OKAY?
MARCIE, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANYBODY OUR AGE FROM SALEM CENTER'S EVER BEEN ALLOWED INTO XAVIER'S SCHOOL!
THAT'S JUST THE POINT! YOU'VE HEARD THE STORIES, LAURIE-- WHAT KIND'VE SCHOOL HAS ONLY A DOZEN STUDENTS, AN' SOME OF 'EM, LIKE THAT RAHNE SINCLAIR, ARE *BABIES!*
AN' THAT PROFESSOR XAVIER IS SO *CREEPY*-- HE LOOKS AT YOU LIKE HE KNOWS EVERYTHING YOU'RE THINKING!
IN YOUR CASE, MARCIE DEAR, THAT ISN'T HARD.

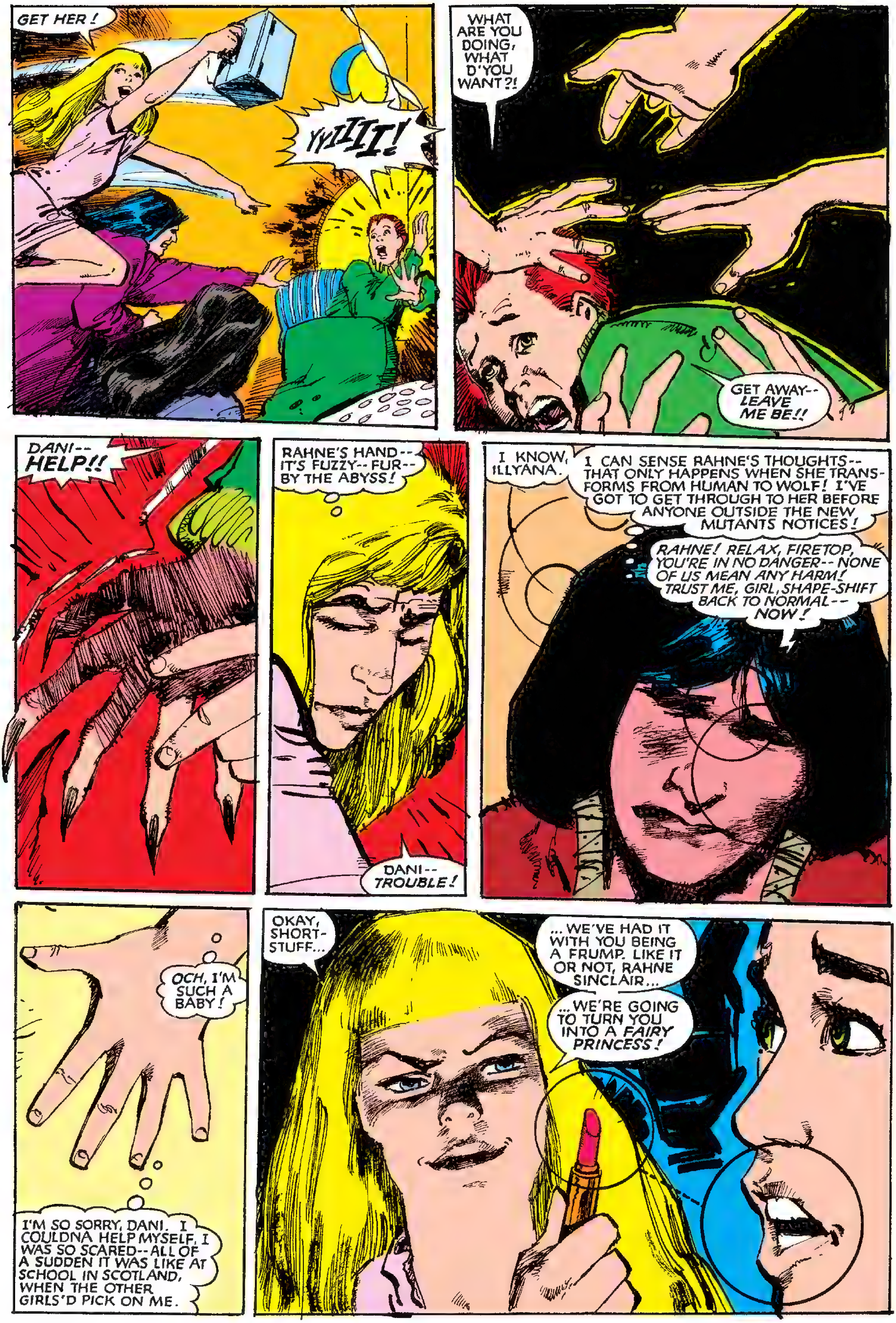

GO AHEAD, JENNY, MAKE FUN! YOU'LL GET YOURS!
I'LL BET ANYTHING THEY'VE GOT BODIES-- OR WORSE-- HIDDEN IN THE BASEMENT!
MARCIE, SOMETIMES YOU ARE SO DUMB-- I MEAN, *REALLY!*
HALF THE STUDENTS HERE ARE FOREIGNERS-- OF COURSE THEY'RE GOING TO SEEM STRANGE!
HEH HEH HEH HEH!
*FAR ABOVE XAVIER'S MANSION-- AND A VERY AMUSED, **VERY** FOREIGN LITTLE DRAGON-- A UNIQUE ASTEROID FLOATS LAZILY AROUND THE GLOBE. THOUGH OF CONSIDERABLE SIZE, IT IS COMPLETELY MASKED FROM DETECTION. ITS OWNER LIKES HIS PRIVACY.*
*HE IS A **MUTANT**-- AS ARE CHARLES XAVIER AND ALL HIS "GIFTED YOUNGSTERS"-- AND MANY CONSIDER HIM TO BE ONE OF THE **ARCH-VILLAINS** OF ALL TIME.*
CLANGALANGAL
CLANGALANG!
*HIS NAME IS MAGNETO.*
THE PROXIMITY ALARM!
A CELESTIAL OBJECT-- DROPPING OUT OF WARP SPACE LITERALLY ON MY DOORSTEP-- HEADING STRAIGHT FOR ME!
IT'S TOO CLOSE--
-- COMING TOO FAST-- !!
*IN DESPERATION, THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM USES HIS AWESOME ABILITIES TO TRY TO DEFLECT THE INTRUDER WITH AN ENERGY BOLT, TO PROTECT HIS HOME WITH A FORCE FIELD...*


...TO NO AVAIL.
UNAWARE OF WHAT HE'S JUST DONE -- MAD WITH PANIC, WEAK ALMOST UNTO DEATH, CONSCIOUS ONLY OF THE NEED TO FIND A PLACE TO HIDE AND RECOVER HIS STRENGTH--

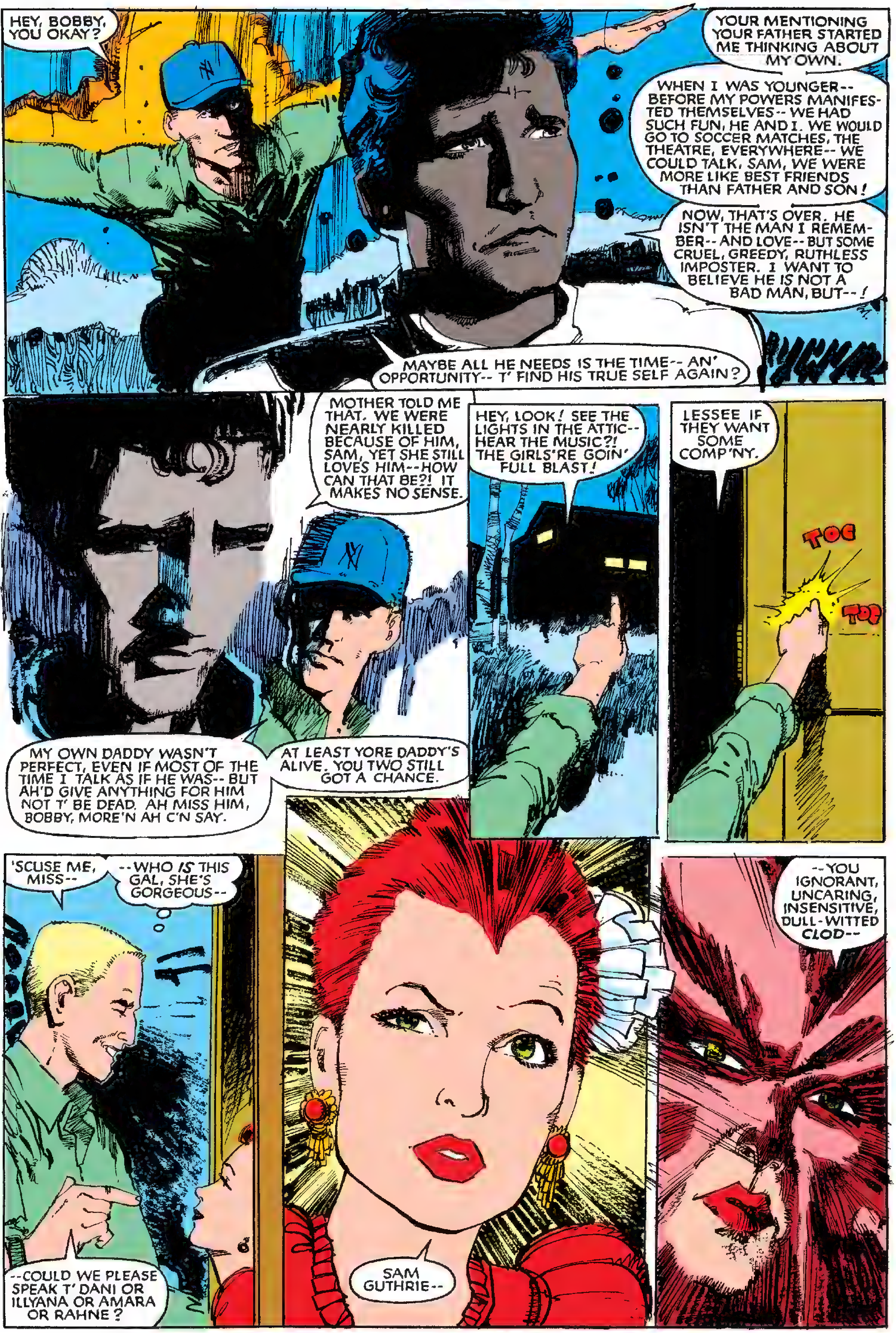

--WARLOCK PLUNGES TOWARDS THE EARTH, UNABLE TO RESIST THE PULL OF ITS GRAVITY.
THERE!
ENERGY I SEEK -- TO RESTORE ME--
-- MUST ANGLE DESCENT... LAND AS CLOSE TO... SOURCE AS POSSIBLE! AND PRAY... THE MAKER LEAVES ME POWER... ENOUGH TO FEED!

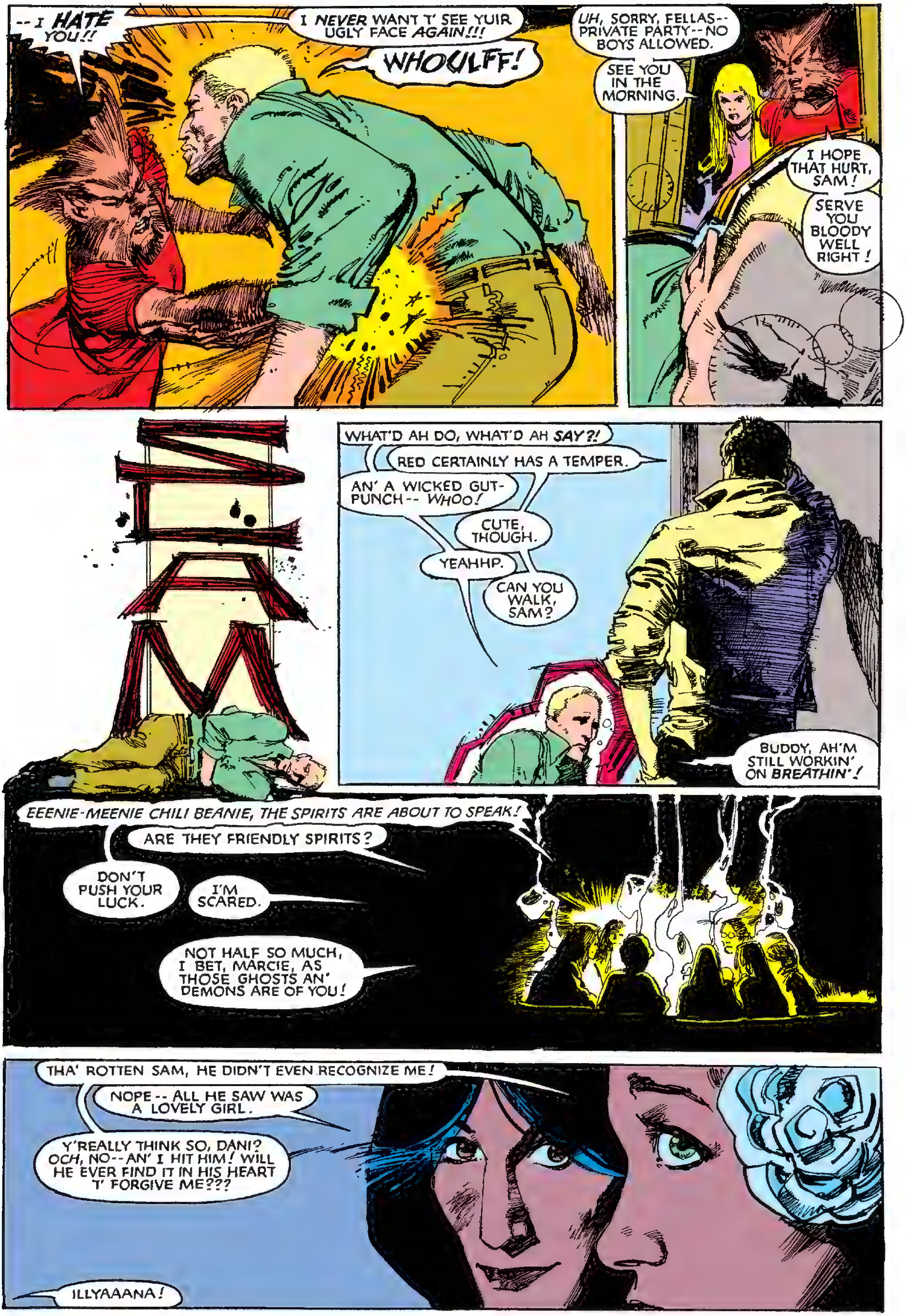

YATTA TOM SELLECK YA
TA GIGGLE YATTAYA
TTA BOD YATTA DATE
YATTAYATTAYA
TA YOU WISH Y
TTA ♡♡ YA
YATTA TOM SELLE
GIGGLE YATT
YATTA
YATT
YA
AT
SIGH!
SEE, MARGO, I TOLD YOU, THE STEP'S *EASY!*
LOSE THE BASEBALL GLOVE, MANOLI.
DIANA, WHO IS THAT PERSON MANOLI LIKES SO MUCH?
*GEE, AMY,* HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW MICHAEL JACKSON?! HE'S THE ABSOLUTE LIVING END, A DREAMBOAT OF A HUNK AND THE CROWN PRINCE OF ROCK'N'ROLL. DON'T THEY HAVE ANY CULTURE AT *ALL* IN ROME--
--I KNEW UPSTATE WAS REMOTE, GIRL, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
I AM SORRY...
...TO SEEM SO STUPID.
*MINERVA!*
THE PROFESSOR WARNED ME AGAINST LOSING MY TEMPER! ANGER IS TRIGGERING MY MUTANT POWER--!
WHAT GIVES?! THE BUILDING'S SHAKING!
THIS IS AMARA'S DOING! BUT HOW CAN WE HELP-- OR STOP-- HER WI'OUT REVEALIN' WHO WE TRULY ARE?!
IS IT AN *EARTHQUAKE??!!!*

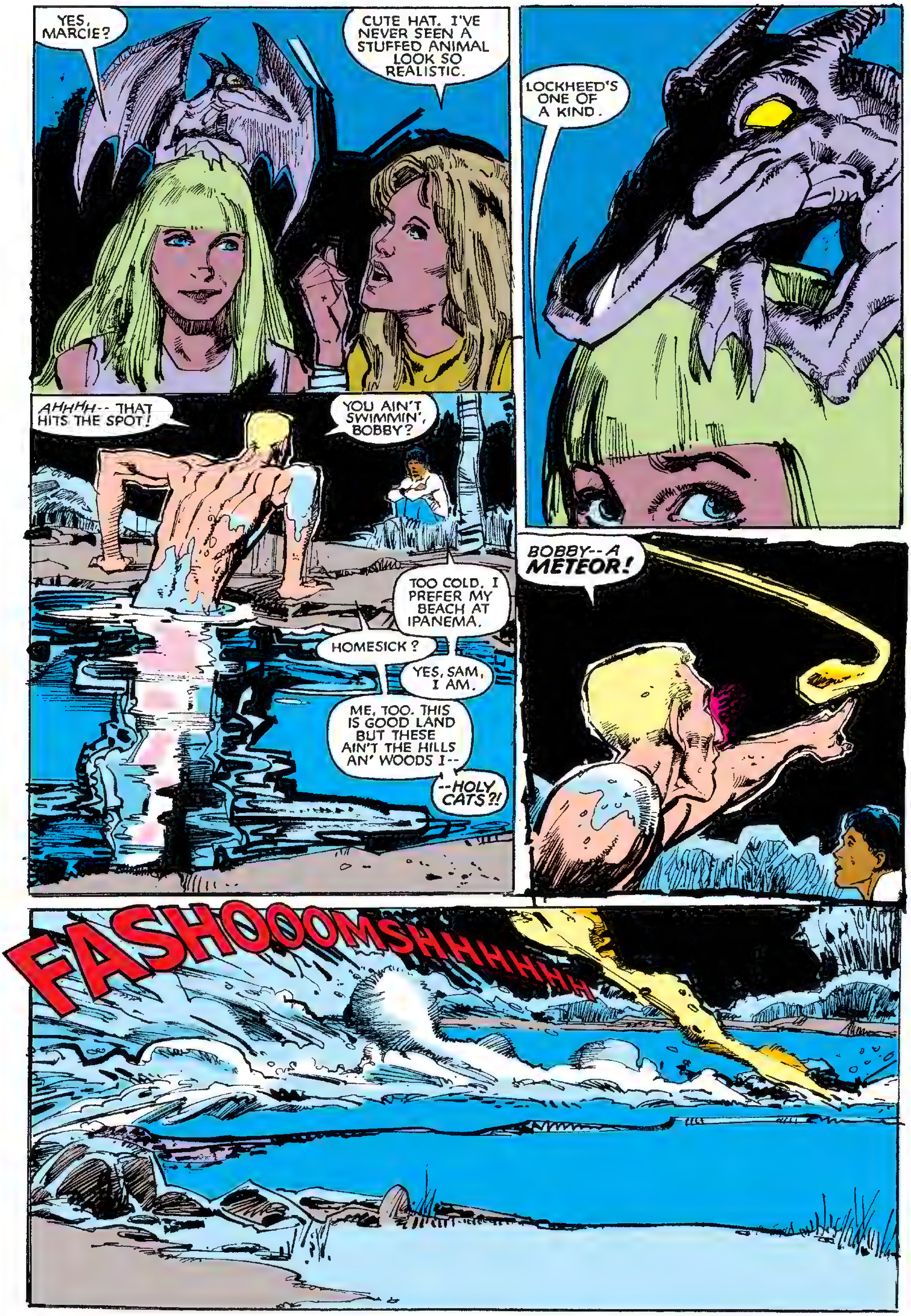

WOW! I LEFT SAN FRANCISCO TO GET AWAY FROM THOSE LITTLE BUGGERS. WAIT'LL I TELL BOBBY, THIS WAS NEAT!
THANK THE GODS IT WAS ONLY A MINOR TREMOR.
AMY, YOU LOOK SO UPSET! I FEEL LIKE SUCH A JERK--
--I NEVER SHOULD'VE SAID THOSE THINGS.
I KNOW YOU DID NOT MEAN THEM, DIANA.
I OVER-REACTED--IN PART BECAUSE *I AM* A STRANGER STILL IN YOUR LAND...
I LOVE YOUR EARRINGS!
THEY WERE MY MOTHER'S.
THAT'S FAKE GOLD, RIGHT?
*REAL?!?*
AND THE DRESS IS *SILK!*
GAWD, I'LL NEVER LOOK AS ELEGANT AS YOU, AMY, ON THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE!
TRUTH HURTS, SHEILA.
WOULD IT BE SO WRONG...
...T' JOIN M' FRIENDS? THEY'RE HAVING SUCH FUN --BUT THE THINGS THEY'RE SAYIN' GO AGAINST ALL I WAS TAUGHT BY REVEREND CRAIG.
MY HEAD TELLS ME THIS ISN'T WICKED OR SINFUL, BUT IN MY HEART I STILL FEEL I'M DOING WRONG.
THEN, WE'RE AGREED?
YOU BETCHA, ILLYANA!
WHY IS EVERYONE LOOKING AT ME SO?

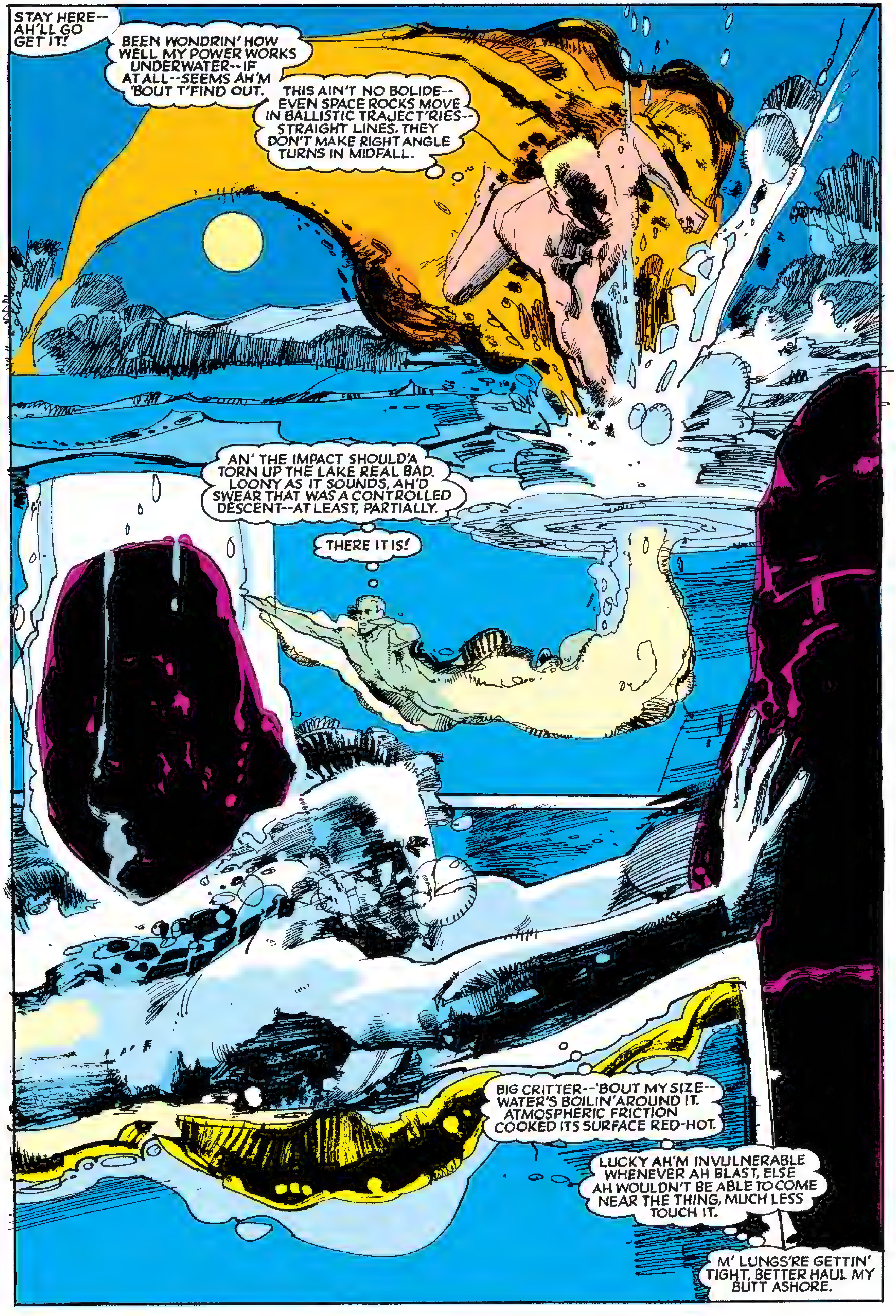

GET HER!
YYIIII!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, WHAT D'YOU WANT?!
GET AWAY-- LEAVE ME BE!!
DANI-- HELP!!
RAHNE'S HAND-- IT'S FUZZY-- FUR-- BY THE ABYSS!
DANI-- TROUBLE!
I KNOW, ILLYANA.
I CAN SENSE RAHNE'S THOUGHTS-- THAT ONLY HAPPENS WHEN SHE TRANSFORMS FROM HUMAN TO WOLF! I'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH TO HER BEFORE ANYONE OUTSIDE THE NEW MUTANTS NOTICES!
RAHNE! RELAX, FIRETOP, YOU'RE IN NO DANGER-- NONE OF US MEAN ANY HARM! TRUST ME, GIRL, SHAPE-SHIFT BACK TO NORMAL-- NOW!
OCH, I'M SUCH A BABY!
I'M SO SORRY, DANI. I COULDNA HELP MYSELF. I WAS SO SCARED-- ALL OF A SUDDEN IT WAS LIKE AT SCHOOL IN SCOTLAND, WHEN THE OTHER GIRLS'D PICK ON ME.
OKAY, SHORT-STUFF...
...WE'VE HAD IT WITH YOU BEING A FRUMP. LIKE IT OR NOT, RAHNE SINCLAIR...
...WE'RE GOING TO TURN YOU INTO A FAIRY PRINCESS!

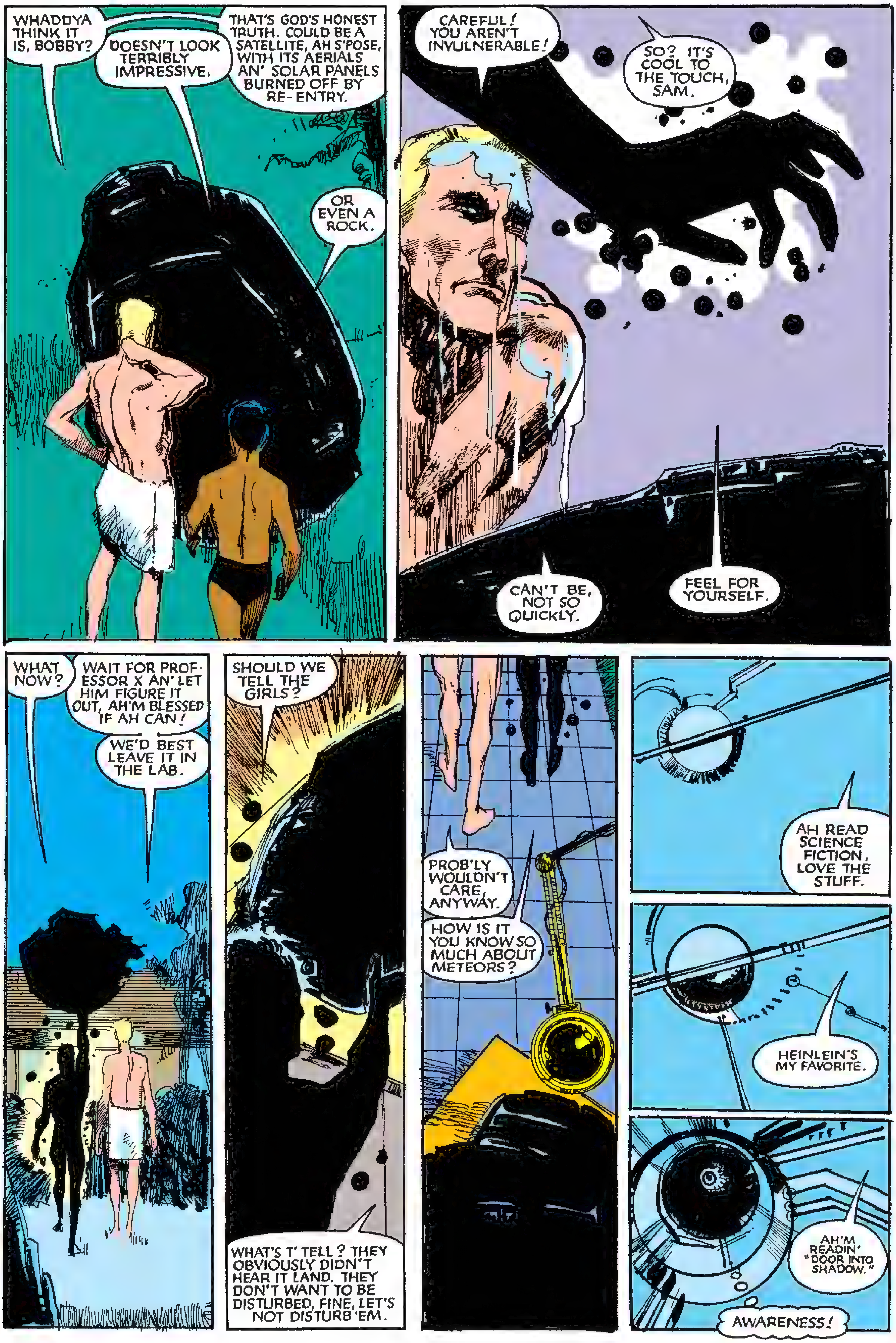
AS THE YOUNG WEREWOLF BEGINS A TRANSFORMATION UNLIKE ANY SHE'S UNDERGONE BEFORE...
...THE ONLY MALE MEMBERS OF THE NEW MUTANTS--ROBERTO DaCOSTA AND SAM GUTHRIE-- APPROACH THE MANSION.
A GREAT GAME, WAS IT NOT, SAM? TWENTY-SEVEN INNINGS, NEARLY A RECORD!
WOULD'A BEEN NICER...
...IF THEY'D BEEN IN CONTENTION.
YOU COULD ALWAYS ROOT FOR THE METS.
AIN'T THE SAME, BOBBY.
NY
JOE DiMAGGIO WAS MY GRAN'PA'S HERO AN' MICKEY MANTLE, MY DAD'S. AH FEEL OBLIGED T' CARRY ON THE TRADITION.
DO YOU THINK THEY'D HIRE ME?
I COULD BE THEIR LONG-BALL SLUGGER SUPREME!
A THOUGHT SHIFTS ROBERTO TO HIS SUPER-STRONG IDENTITY AS SUNSPOT, AND...
BABE RUTH--EAT YOUR HEART OUT!
KCHOW!
BOBBY, YOU DUMB CLUCK--YOU MAY'VE HIT THAT SUCKER A COUNTRY MILE...
...BUT S'POSE SOMEBODY'S UNDERNEATH WHEN IT LANDS?!
LIKE HIS NAMESAKE, CANNONBALL ROCKETS SWIFTLY THROUGH THE AIR, AND TENDS TO PULVERIZE ANYTHING THAT GETS IN HIS WAY.
ANYBODY C'N HIT FUNGOS, PAL--LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU STACK UP AGAINST A HOT PITCHER. THEN, MAYBE, YOU CAN BRAG.


HEY, BOBBY, YOU OKAY?
YOUR MENTIONING YOUR FATHER STARTED ME THINKING ABOUT MY OWN.
WHEN I WAS YOUNGER-- BEFORE MY POWERS MANIFESTED THEMSELVES-- WE HAD SUCH FUN, HE AND I. WE WOULD GO TO SOCCER MATCHES, THE THEATRE, EVERYWHERE-- WE COULD TALK, SAM, WE WERE MORE LIKE BEST FRIENDS THAN FATHER AND SON!
NOW, THAT'S OVER. HE ISN'T THE MAN I REMEMBER-- AND LOVE-- BUT SOME CRUEL, GREEDY, RUTHLESS IMPOSTER. I WANT TO BELIEVE HE IS NOT A BAD MAN, BUT--!
MAYBE ALL HE NEEDS IS THE TIME-- AN' OPPORTUNITY-- T' FIND HIS TRUE SELF AGAIN?
MOTHER TOLD ME THAT. WE WERE NEARLY KILLED BECAUSE OF HIM, SAM, YET SHE STILL LOVES HIM--HOW CAN THAT BE?! IT MAKES NO SENSE.
MY OWN DADDY WASN'T PERFECT, EVEN IF MOST OF THE TIME I TALK AS IF HE WAS-- BUT AH'D GIVE ANYTHING FOR HIM NOT T' BE DEAD. AH MISS HIM, BOBBY, MORE'N AH C'N SAY.
AT LEAST YORE DADDY'S ALIVE. YOU TWO STILL GOT A CHANCE.
HEY, LOOK! SEE THE LIGHTS IN THE ATTIC-- HEAR THE MUSIC?! THE GIRLS'RE GOIN' FULL BLAST!
LESSEE IF THEY WANT SOME COMP'NY.
TOC
TOC
'SCUSE ME, MISS--
--WHO *IS* THIS GAL, SHE'S GORGEOUS--
--COULD WE PLEASE SPEAK T' DANI OR ILLYANA OR AMARA OR RAHNE?
SAM GUTHRIE--
--YOU IGNORANT, UNCARING, INSENSITIVE, DULL-WITTED CLOD--

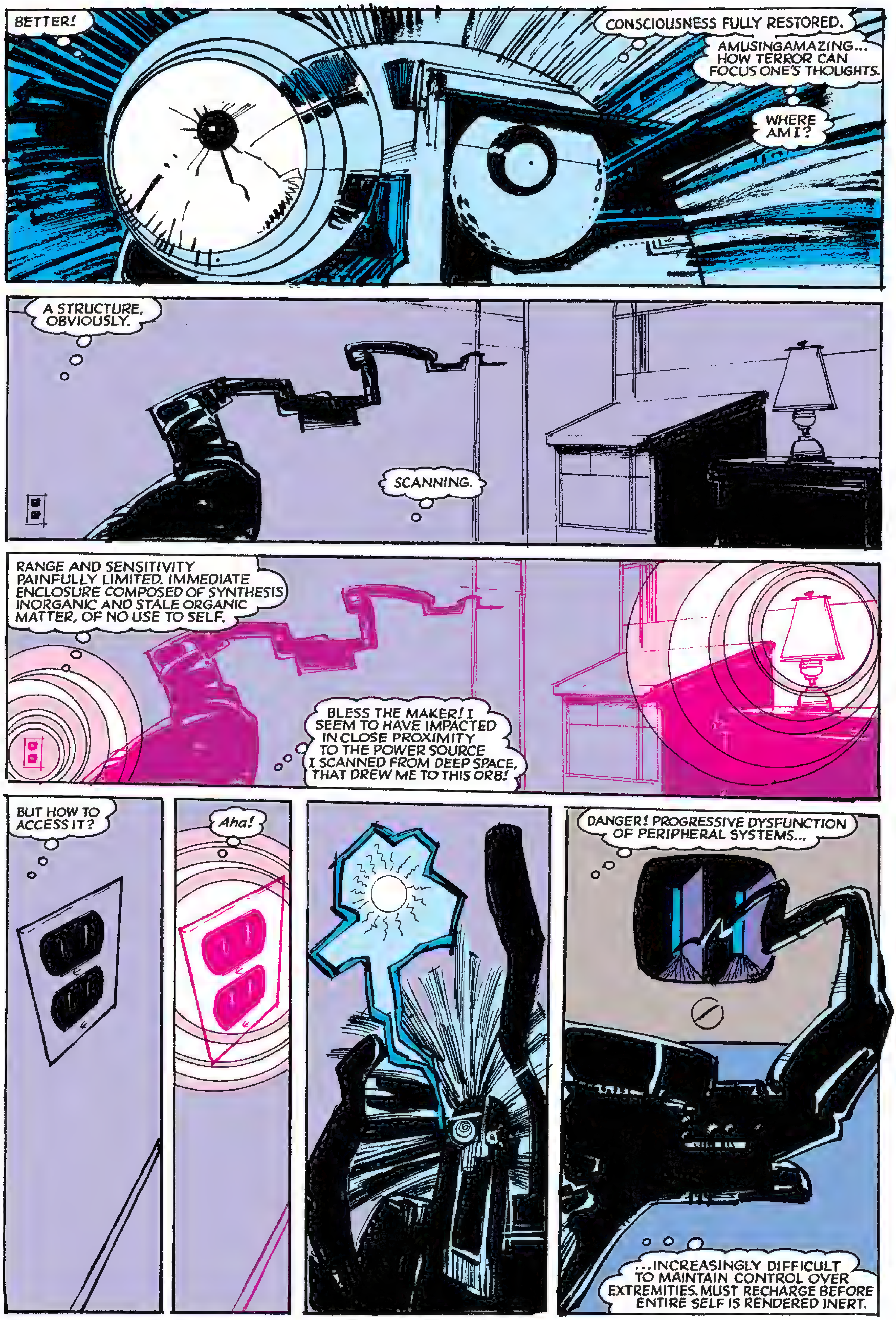

-- I HATE YOU!!
I NEVER WANT T' SEE YUIR UGLY FACE AGAIN!!!
WHOULFF!
UH, SORRY, FELLAS-- PRIVATE PARTY--NO BOYS ALLOWED.
SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
I HOPE THAT HURT, SAM!
SERVE YOU BLOODY WELL RIGHT!
SLAM
WHAT'D AH DO, WHAT'D AH SAY?!
RED CERTAINLY HAS A TEMPER.
AN' A WICKED GUT-PUNCH-- WHOO!
CUTE, THOUGH.
YEAHHP.
CAN YOU WALK, SAM?
BUDDY, AH'M STILL WORKIN' ON BREATHIN'!
EEENIE-MEENIE CHILI BEANIE, THE SPIRITS ARE ABOUT TO SPEAK!
ARE THEY FRIENDLY SPIRITS?
DON'T PUSH YOUR LUCK.
I'M SCARED.
NOT HALF SO MUCH, I BET, MARCIE, AS THOSE GHOSTS AN' DEMONS ARE OF YOU!
THA' ROTTEN SAM, HE DIDN'T EVEN RECOGNIZE ME!
NOPE -- ALL HE SAW WAS A LOVELY GIRL.
Y'REALLY THINK SO, DANI? OCH, NO--AN' I HIT HIM! WILL HE EVER FIND IT IN HIS HEART T' FORGIVE ME???
ILLYAAANA!


YES, MARCIE?
CUTE HAT. I'VE NEVER SEEN A STUFFED ANIMAL LOOK SO REALISTIC.
LOCKHEED'S ONE OF A KIND.
*AHHHH*-- THAT HITS THE SPOT!
YOU AIN'T SWIMMIN', BOBBY?
TOO COLD. I PREFER MY BEACH AT IPANEMA.
HOMESICK?
YES, SAM, I AM.
ME, TOO. THIS IS GOOD LAND BUT THESE AIN'T THE HILLS AN' WOODS I--
*--HOLY CATS?!*
*BOBBY-- A* ***METEOR!***
FASHOOOMSHHHHHHH

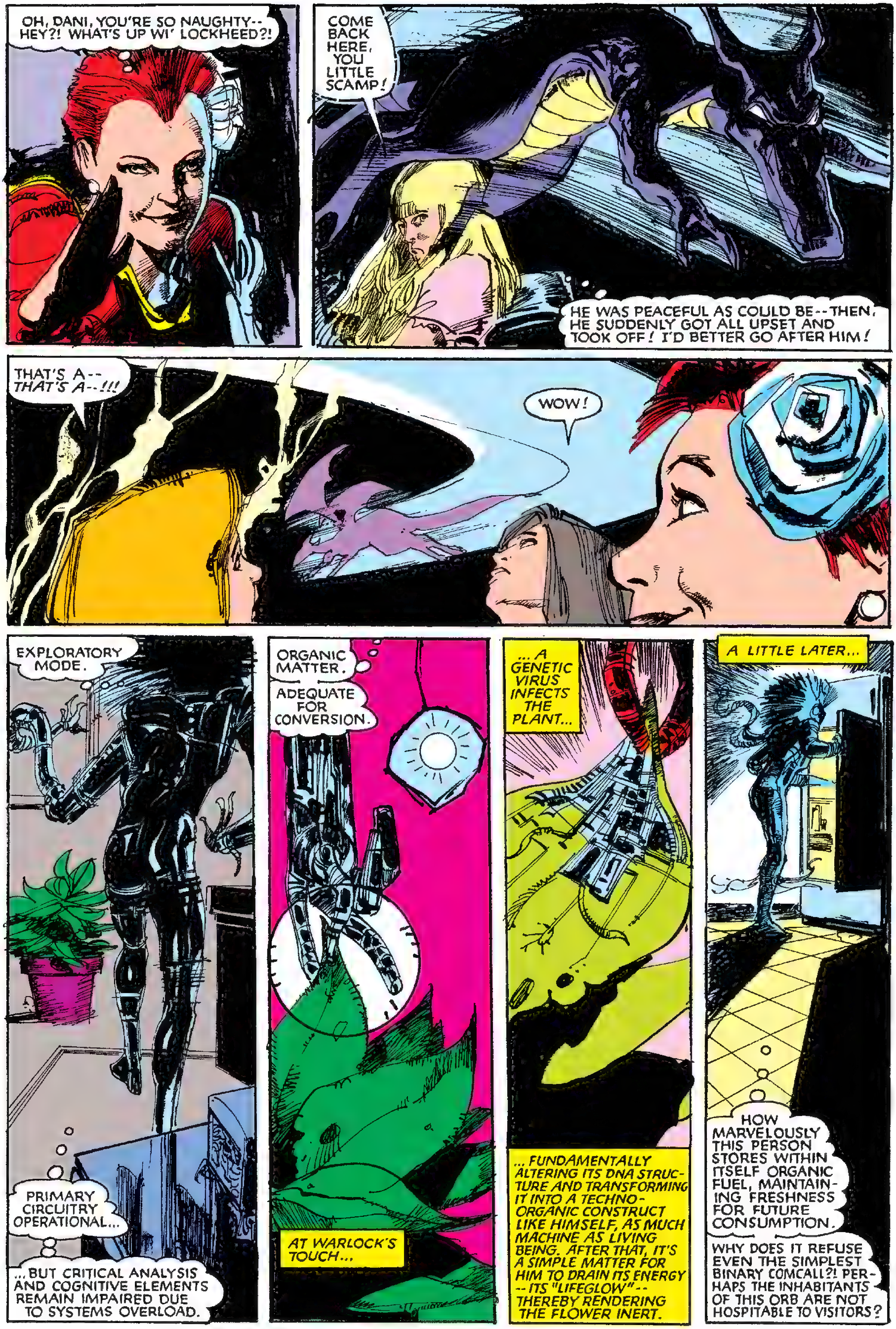

STAY HERE-- AH'LL GO GET IT!
BEEN WONDRIN' HOW WELL MY POWER WORKS UNDERWATER--IF AT ALL--SEEMS AH'M 'BOUT T'FIND OUT.
THIS AIN'T NO BOLIDE-- EVEN SPACE ROCKS MOVE IN BALLISTIC TRAJECT'RIES-- STRAIGHT LINES. THEY DON'T MAKE RIGHT ANGLE TURNS IN MIDFALL.
AN' THE IMPACT SHOULD'A TORN UP THE LAKE REAL BAD. LOONY AS IT SOUNDS, AH'D SWEAR THAT WAS A CONTROLLED DESCENT--AT LEAST, PARTIALLY.
THERE IT IS!
BIG CRITTER--'BOUT MY SIZE-- WATER'S BOILIN' AROUND IT. ATMOSPHERIC FRICTION COOKED ITS SURFACE RED-HOT.
LUCKY AH'M INVULNERABLE WHENEVER AH BLAST, ELSE AH WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COME NEAR THE THING, MUCH LESS TOUCH IT.
M' LUNGS'RE GETTIN' TIGHT, BETTER HAUL MY BUTT ASHORE.


WHADDYA THINK IT IS, BOBBY?
DOESN'T LOOK TERRIBLY IMPRESSIVE.
THAT'S GOD'S HONEST TRUTH. COULD BE A SATELLITE, AH S'POSE, WITH ITS AERIALS AN' SOLAR PANELS BURNED OFF BY RE-ENTRY.
OR EVEN A ROCK.
CAREFUL! YOU AREN'T INVULNERABLE!
SO? IT'S COOL TO THE TOUCH, SAM.
CAN'T BE, NOT SO QUICKLY.
FEEL FOR YOURSELF.
WHAT NOW?
WAIT FOR PROFESSOR X AN' LET HIM FIGURE IT OUT, AH'M BLESSED IF AH CAN!
WE'D BEST LEAVE IT IN THE LAB.
SHOULD WE TELL THE GIRLS?
WHAT'S T' TELL? THEY OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T HEAR IT LAND. THEY DON'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED, FINE, LET'S NOT DISTURB 'EM.
PROB'LY WOULDN'T CARE, ANYWAY.
HOW IS IT YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT METEORS?
AH READ SCIENCE FICTION, LOVE THE STUFF.
HEINLEIN'S MY FAVORITE.
AH'M READIN' "DOOR INTO SHADOW."
AWARENESS!

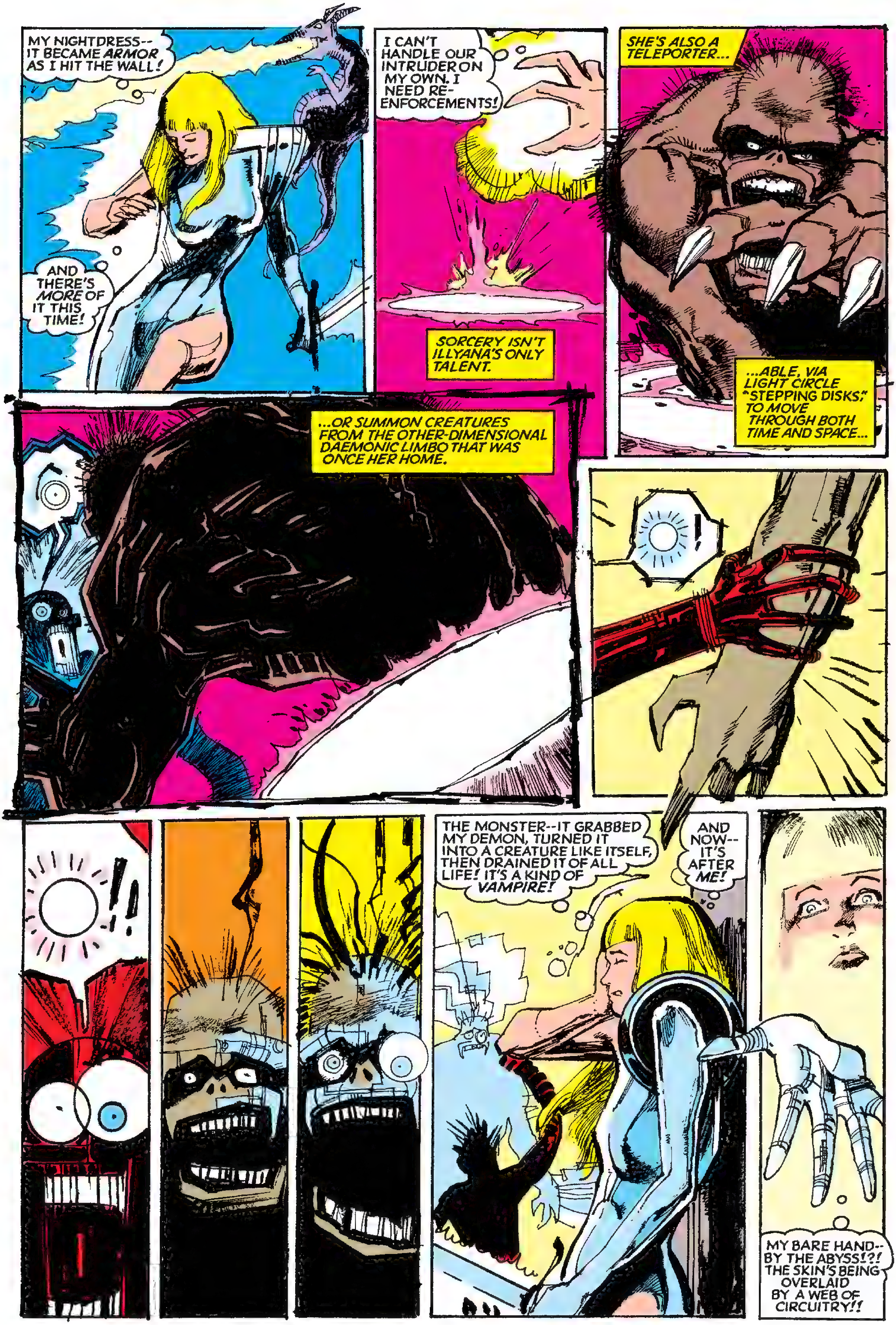
THANKFULNESS.
RESTORE ORDER SELF--
--THOUGHTS AND FORM!
WEAK!
LIFELIGHT FADING!
TIRED...
...DESIRE REST.
FEARFALLINGFIREDISCORPORATION--
CALM!
YEARNING.
OBLIVION.
MAGUS--
--NO!

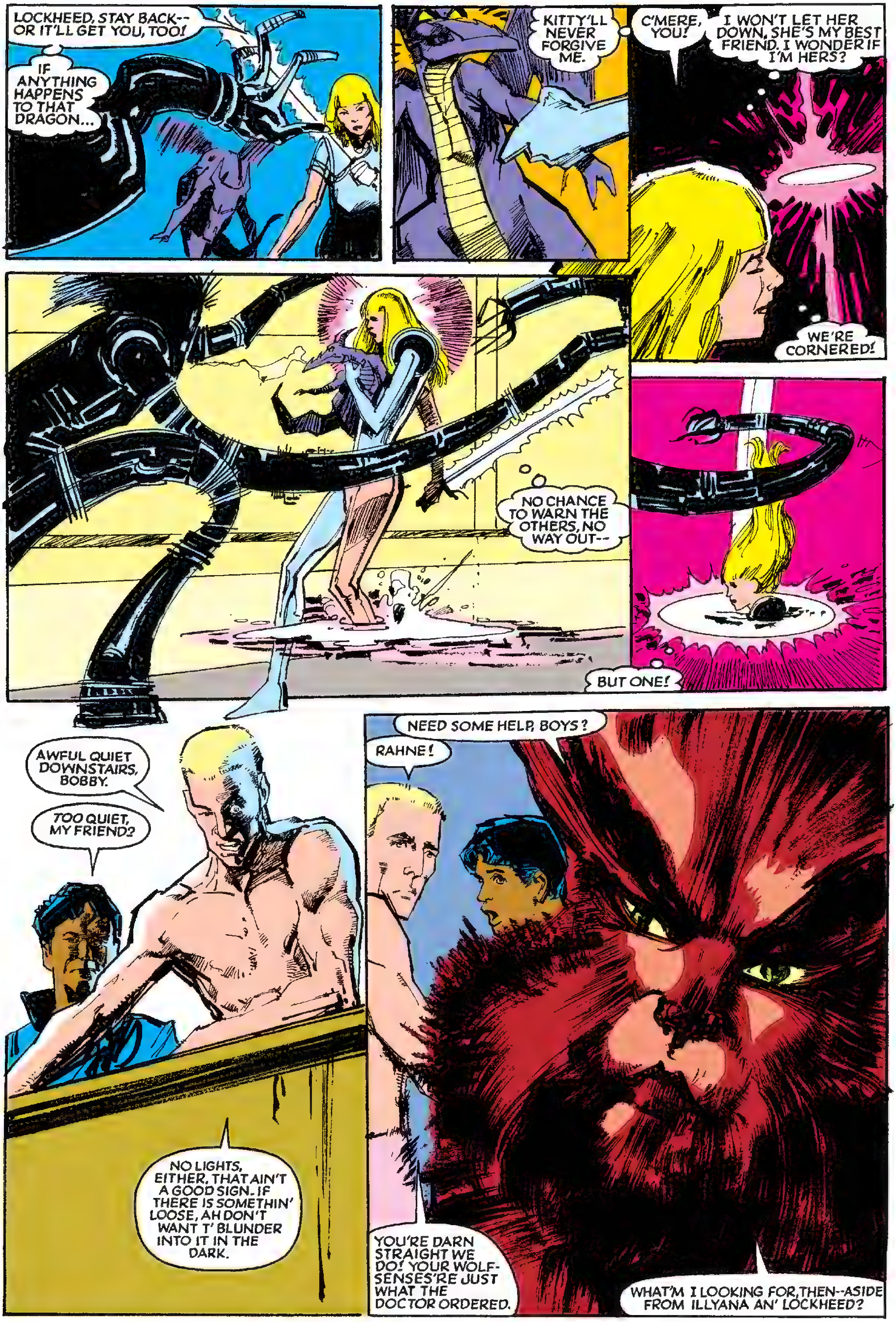

BETTER!
CONSCIOUSNESS FULLY RESTORED.
AMUSINGAMAZING... HOW TERROR CAN FOCUS ONE'S THOUGHTS.
WHERE AM I?
A STRUCTURE, OBVIOUSLY.
SCANNING.
RANGE AND SENSITIVITY PAINFULLY LIMITED. IMMEDIATE ENCLOSURE COMPOSED OF SYNTHESIS INORGANIC AND STALE ORGANIC MATTER, OF NO USE TO SELF.
BLESS THE MAKER! I SEEM TO HAVE IMPACTED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE POWER SOURCE I SCANNED FROM DEEP SPACE, THAT DREW ME TO THIS ORB!
BUT HOW TO ACCESS IT?
Aha!
DANGER! PROGRESSIVE DYSFUNCTION OF PERIPHERAL SYSTEMS...
...INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER EXTREMITIES. MUST RECHARGE BEFORE ENTIRE SELF IS RENDERED INERT.

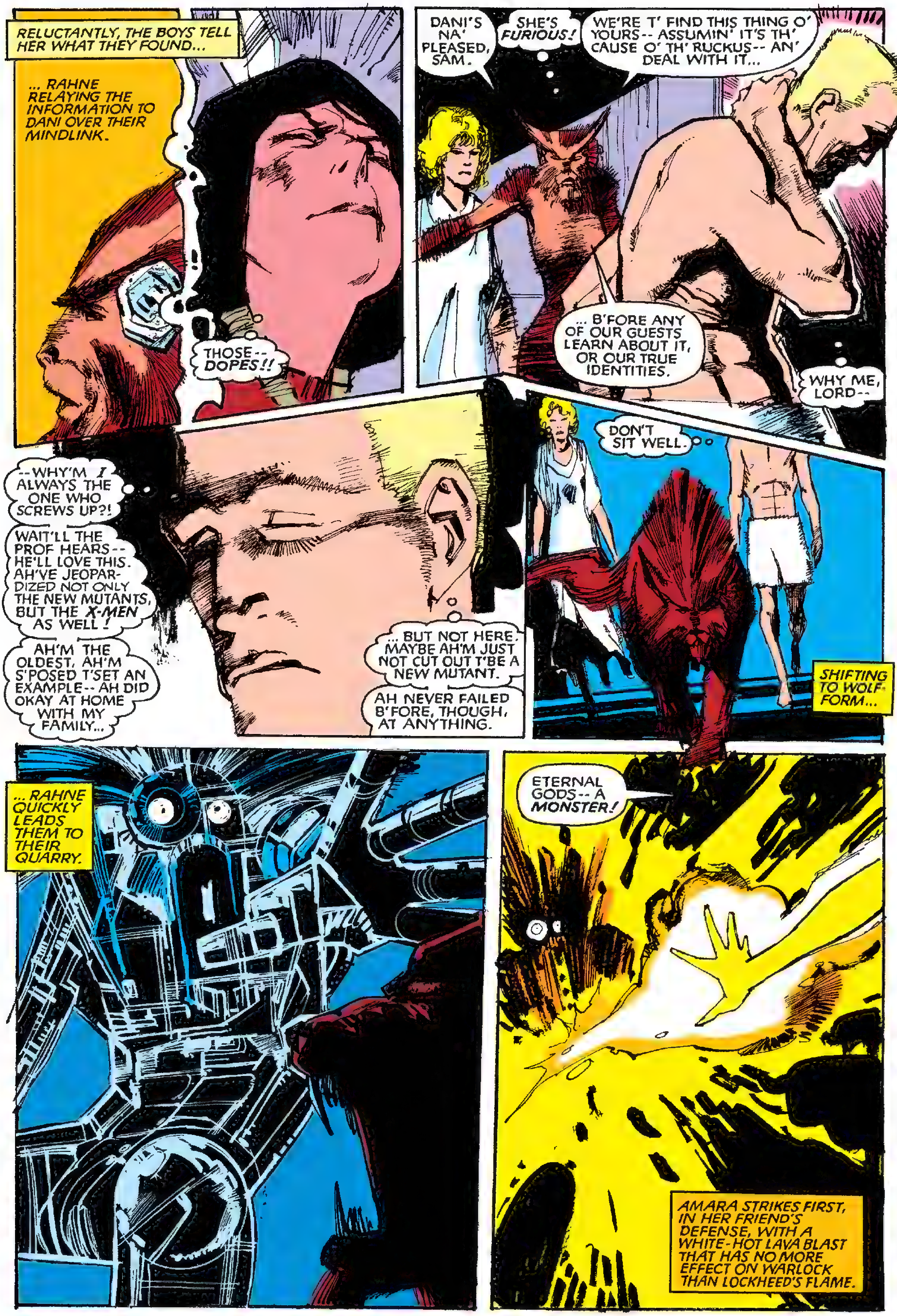
ON-LINE--ABSORBING POWER--JOYRAPTUREALARM!
TOO MUCH--CANNOT COPE--
YAIOWW!!!
ZZKT!
FRAZZ
blink!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THEIR ATTIC, BLISSFULLY UNAWARE...
HEAR ME, O SPIRITS--THIS IS SILLY, THERE'S NO SUCH THING!
ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE, MARCIE?
I KNOW WE'RE ONLY PLAYING...
...BUT THIS STILL DOES NA' FEEL RIGHT.
THERE ARE REAL DEMONS AND MAGICKAL BEASTIES IN THE WORLD--WE'VE FOUGHT 'EM! INVOKING ANY OF THEIR KIND--ESPECIALLY IN JEST--SMACKS O' TEMPTING FATE. I THOUGHT AMARA WAS MORE SENSIBLE.
EEEOOOYOYOYYYY
WHOSOEVER SUMMONETH ME, THE DJINN OF THE SACRED BOARD?
WOW!
FROM THE LOOK RAHNE'S TOSSING ME, SHE'S GUESSED THE TRUTH--THAT SPECTRE'S MY CREATION.
I CONJURED IT WITHOUT ANY STRAIN--MY INJURIES DON'T SEEM TO HAVE CRIPPLED MY MUTANT POWER TO MANIFEST IMAGES FROM PEOPLE'S MINDS--THAT'S GREAT!

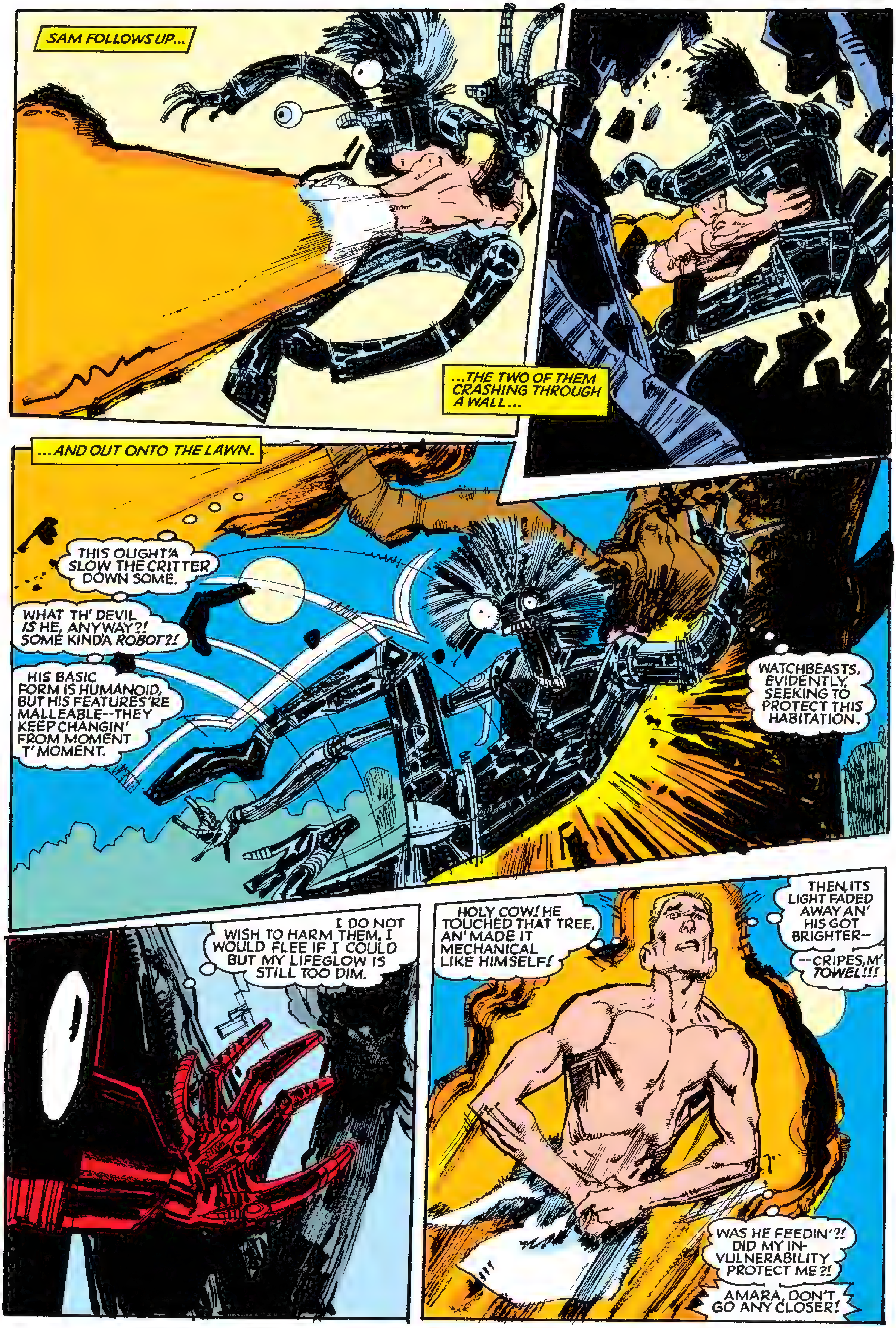

OH, DANI, YOU'RE SO NAUGHTY-- HEY?! WHAT'S UP WI' LOCKHEED?!
COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE SCAMP!
HE WAS PEACEFUL AS COULD BE--THEN, HE SUDDENLY GOT ALL UPSET AND TOOK OFF! I'D BETTER GO AFTER HIM!
THAT'S A-- *THAT'S A--!!!*
WOW!
EXPLORATORY MODE.
PRIMARY CIRCUITRY OPERATIONAL...
...BUT CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND COGNITIVE ELEMENTS REMAIN IMPAIRED DUE TO SYSTEMS OVERLOAD.
ORGANIC MATTER.
ADEQUATE FOR CONVERSION.
*AT WARLOCK'S TOUCH...*
*...A GENETIC VIRUS INFECTS THE PLANT...*
*...FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERING ITS DNA STRUCTURE AND TRANSFORMING IT INTO A TECHNO-ORGANIC CONSTRUCT LIKE HIMSELF, AS MUCH MACHINE AS LIVING BEING. AFTER THAT, IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HIM TO DRAIN ITS ENERGY -- ITS "LIFEGLOW" -- THEREBY RENDERING THE FLOWER INERT.*
*A LITTLE LATER...*
HOW MARVELOUSLY THIS PERSON STORES WITHIN ITSELF ORGANIC FUEL, MAINTAINING FRESHNESS FOR FUTURE CONSUMPTION.
WHY DOES IT REFUSE EVEN THE SIMPLEST BINARY COMCALL?! PERHAPS THE INHABITANTS OF THIS ORB ARE NOT HOSPITABLE TO VISITORS?

ALARM!
PRAISE THE MAKER! DESPITE ITS MODEST SIZE...
...THIS ENTITY POSSESSES MORE THAN SUFFICIENT LIFEGLOW FOR MY NEEDS.
LOCKHEED, HOWEVER, KNOWS A THREAT WHEN HE SEES IT...
...AND RESPONDS ACCORDINGLY.
WEEZIE, WHAT WAS THAT?!
THE ROAR OF A VERY ANGRY LITTLE DRAGON?
BOBBY, DID YOU HEAR--?!
A ROAR!
IT CAME FROM DOWNSTAIRS!
SAM, YOU DON'T THINK--?!
LET'S FIND OUT--FAST!
A DEMON--IT HAS LOCKHEED CORNERED!
GLEAMING LIKE A STAR, ILLYANA'S SOUL-SWORD APPEARS.
THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION...
...OF HER POWER AS A SORCERESS...
...IT CAN CRIPPLE--EVEN DESTROY--ANYTHING OF MAGICKAL ORIGIN.
UNFORTUNATELY, WARLOCK IS NOT.
GNGNH!


MY NIGHTDRESS-- IT BECAME *ARMOR* AS I HIT THE WALL!
AND THERE'S *MORE* OF IT THIS TIME!
I CAN'T HANDLE OUR INTRUDER ON MY OWN. I NEED RE-ENFORCEMENTS!
*SORCERY ISN'T ILLYANA'S ONLY TALENT.*
*SHE'S ALSO A TELEPORTER...*
*...ABLE, VIA LIGHT CIRCLE "STEPPING DISKS," TO MOVE THROUGH BOTH TIME AND SPACE...*
*...OR SUMMON CREATURES FROM THE OTHER-DIMENSIONAL DAEMONIC LIMBO THAT WAS ONCE HER HOME.*
!
!!
THE MONSTER--IT GRABBED MY DEMON, TURNED IT INTO A CREATURE LIKE ITSELF, THEN DRAINED IT OF ALL LIFE! IT'S A KIND OF *VAMPIRE!*
AND NOW-- IT'S AFTER *ME!*
MY BARE HAND-- BY THE ABYSS!?! THE SKIN'S BEING OVERLAID BY A WEB OF CIRCUITRY!!

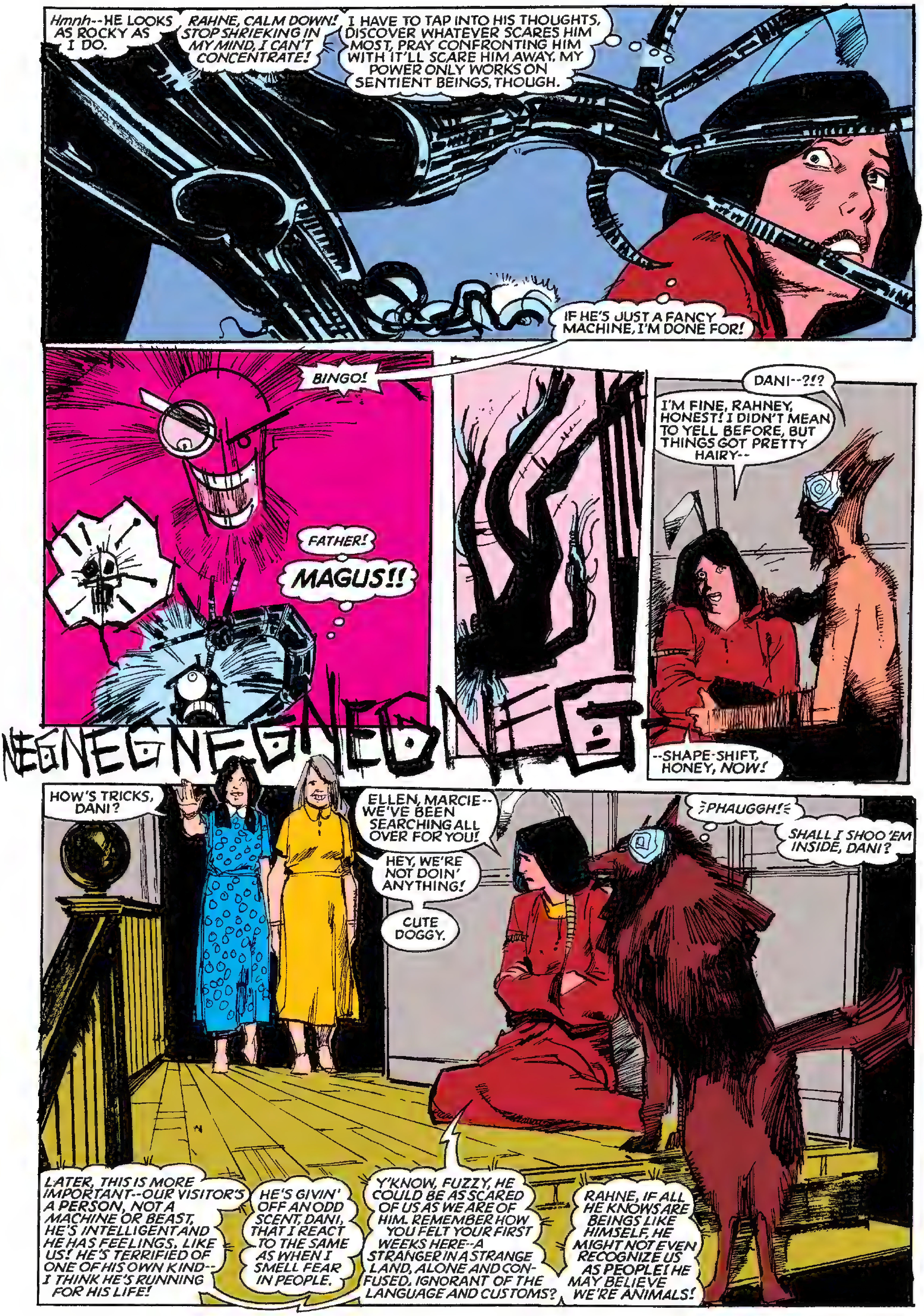

LOCKHEED, STAY BACK-- OR IT'LL GET YOU, TOO!
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO THAT DRAGON...
KITTY'LL NEVER FORGIVE ME.
C'MERE, YOU!
I WON'T LET HER DOWN. SHE'S MY BEST FRIEND. I WONDER IF I'M HERS?
WE'RE CORNERED!
NO CHANCE TO WARN THE OTHERS, NO WAY OUT--
BUT ONE!
AWFUL QUIET DOWNSTAIRS, BOBBY.
TOO QUIET, MY FRIEND?
NO LIGHTS, EITHER. THAT AIN'T A GOOD SIGN. IF THERE IS SOMETHIN' LOOSE, AH DON'T WANT T' BLUNDER INTO IT IN THE DARK.
NEED SOME HELP, BOYS?
RAHNE!
YOU'RE DARN STRAIGHT WE DO! YOUR WOLF-SENSES'RE JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED.
WHAT'M I LOOKING FOR, THEN--ASIDE FROM ILLYANA AN' LOCKHEED?

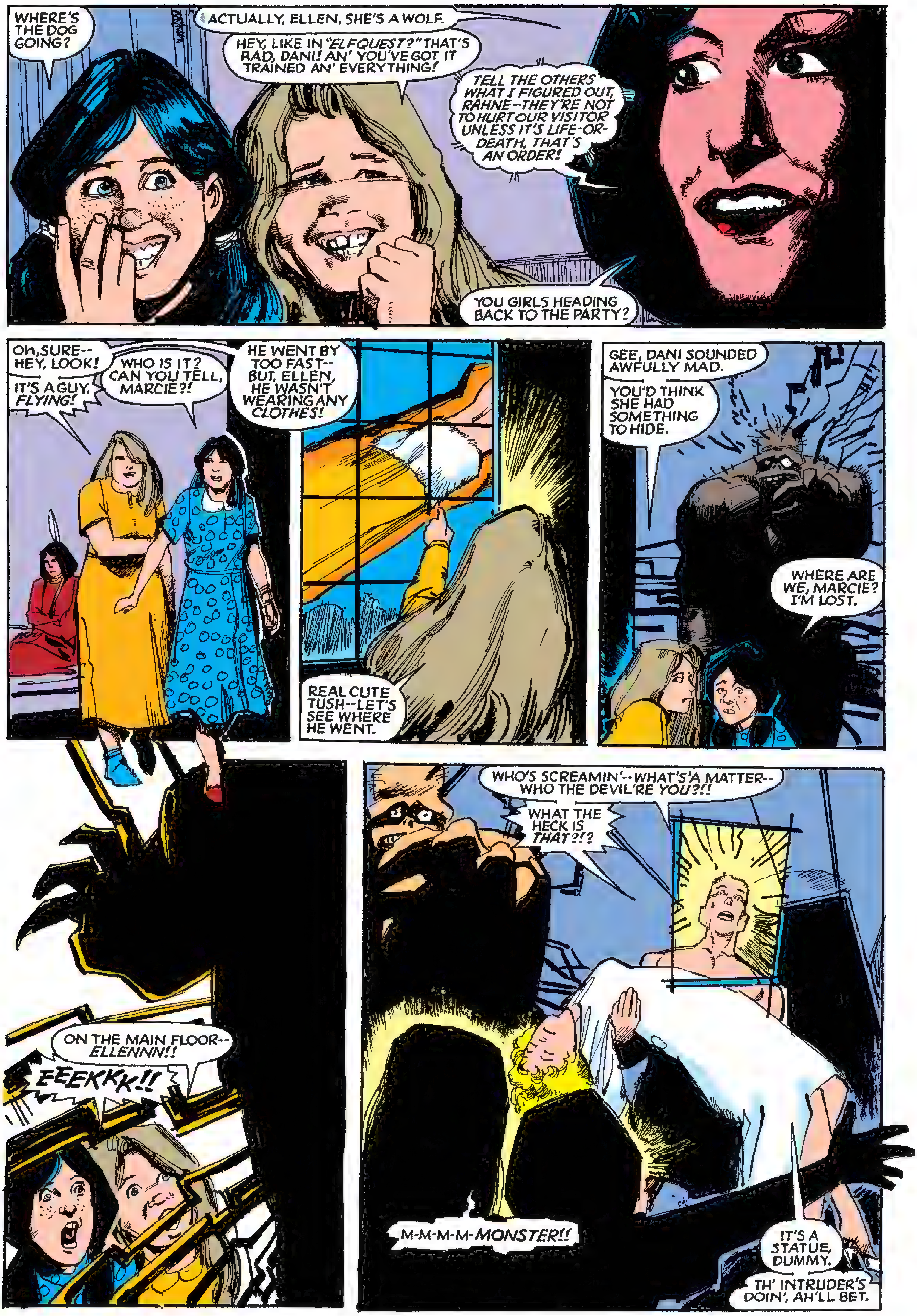

RELUCTANTLY, THE BOYS TELL HER WHAT THEY FOUND...
... RAHNE RELAYING THE INFORMATION TO DANI OVER THEIR MINDLINK.
THOSE-- DOPES!!
DANI'S NA' PLEASED, SAM.
SHE'S FURIOUS!
WE'RE T' FIND THIS THING O' YOURS-- ASSUMIN' IT'S TH' CAUSE O' TH' RUCKUS-- AN' DEAL WITH IT...
... B'FORE ANY OF OUR GUESTS LEARN ABOUT IT, OR OUR TRUE IDENTITIES.
WHY ME, LORD--
--WHY'M I ALWAYS THE ONE WHO SCREWS UP?!
WAIT'LL THE PROF HEARS-- HE'LL LOVE THIS. AH'VE JEOPARDIZED NOT ONLY THE NEW MUTANTS, BUT THE X-MEN AS WELL!
AH'M THE OLDEST. AH'M S'POSED T'SET AN EXAMPLE-- AH DID OKAY AT HOME WITH MY FAMILY...
... BUT NOT HERE. MAYBE AH'M JUST NOT CUT OUT T'BE A NEW MUTANT.
AH NEVER FAILED B'FORE, THOUGH, AT ANYTHING.
DON'T SIT WELL.
SHIFTING TO WOLF-FORM...
... RAHNE QUICKLY LEADS THEM TO THEIR QUARRY.
ETERNAL GODS-- A MONSTER!
AMARA STRIKES FIRST, IN HER FRIEND'S DEFENSE, WITH A WHITE-HOT LAVA BLAST THAT HAS NO MORE EFFECT ON WARLOCK THAN LOCKHEED'S FLAME.

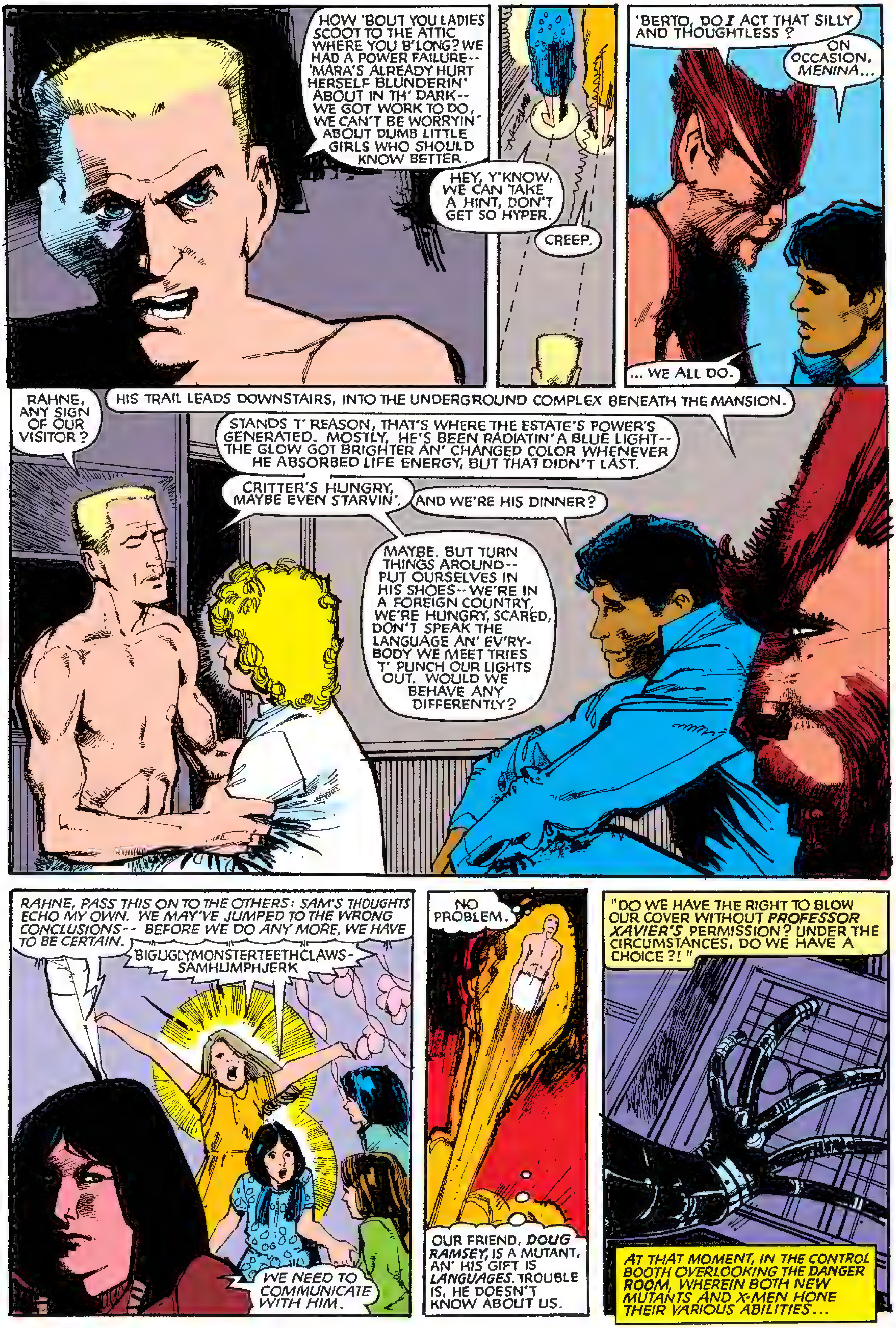

SAM FOLLOWS UP...
...THE TWO OF THEM CRASHING THROUGH A WALL...
...AND OUT ONTO THE LAWN.
THIS OUGHT'A SLOW THE CRITTER DOWN SOME.
WHAT TH' DEVIL *IS* HE, ANYWAY?! SOME KIND'A *ROBOT*?!
HIS BASIC FORM IS HUMANOID, BUT HIS FEATURES'RE MALLEABLE--THEY KEEP CHANGIN' FROM MOMENT T' MOMENT.
WATCHBEASTS, EVIDENTLY, SEEKING TO PROTECT THIS HABITATION.
I DO NOT WISH TO HARM THEM. I WOULD FLEE IF I COULD BUT MY LIFEGLOW IS STILL TOO DIM.
HOLY COW! HE TOUCHED THAT TREE, AN' MADE IT MECHANICAL LIKE HIMSELF!
THEN, ITS LIGHT FADED AWAY AN' HIS GOT BRIGHTER--
--CRIPES, M' *TOWEL*!!!
WAS HE FEEDIN'?! DID MY INVULNERABILITY PROTECT ME?!
AMARA, DON'T GO ANY CLOSER!

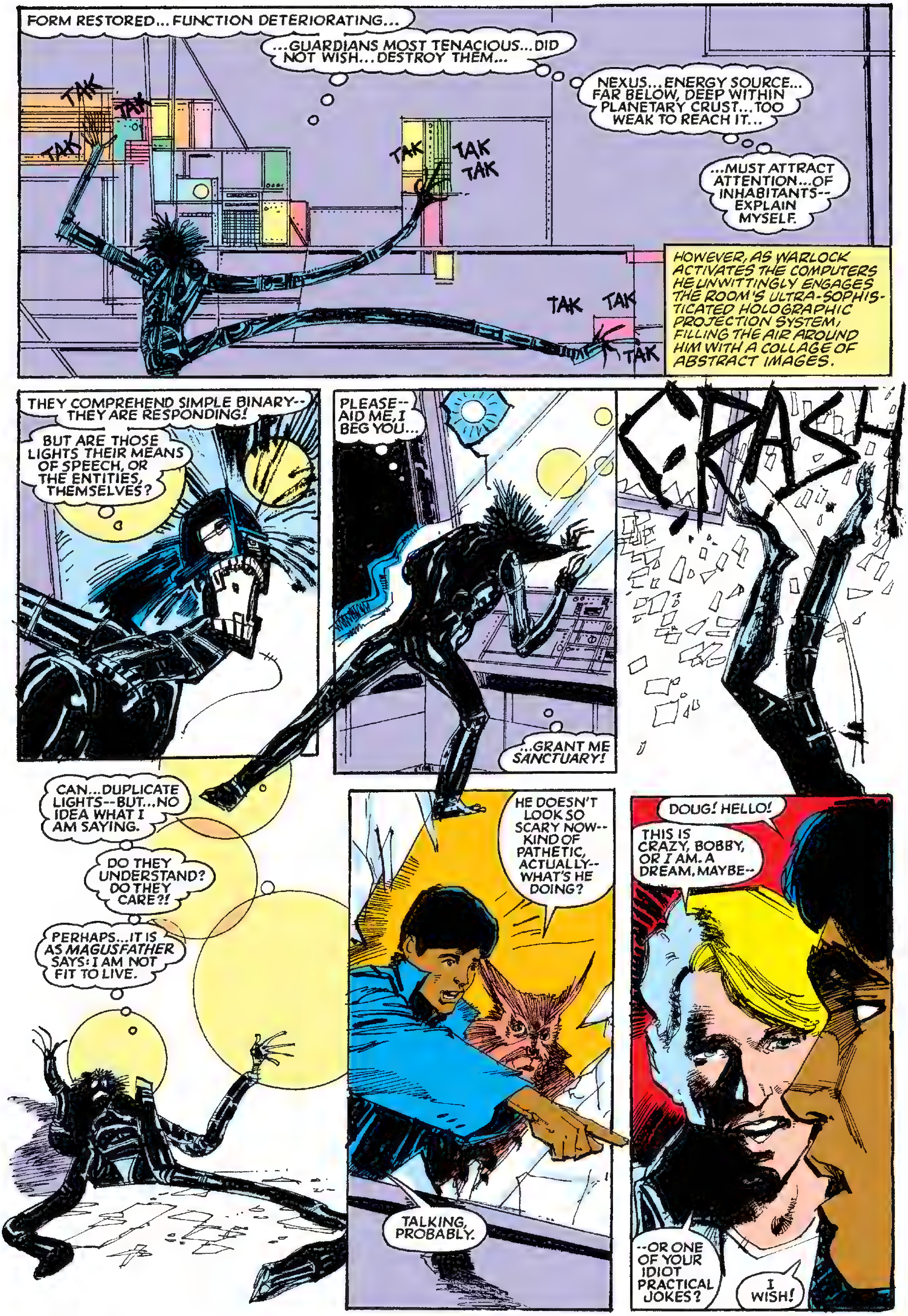
I SAW, SAM, I UNDERSTAND.
NO CREATURE OUT OF LEGEND-- NOT EVEN A DENIZEN OF THE DEEPEST PITS OF TARTARUS--
--COULD BE AS FOUL AND HORRIBLE AS THIS.
ARE WE TOO LATE TO SAVE ILLYANA AND LOCKHEED--IS THAT WHY THEY HAVE NOT JOINED US, BECAUSE THE MONSTER HAS DESTROYED THEM?!
MY LAVA BLAST PROVED USELESS...
...BUT I HAVE OTHER POWERS.
AT AMARA'S COMMAND, THE GROUND BENEATH WARLOCK'S FEET BECOMES MOLTEN MAGMA, AND...
GOT HIM!
BRAVO, AMARA!
SAVE YOUR CHEERS, YOUNG COMRADE...
UNTIL WE ARE CERTAIN--
AIIEEE!
ROBERTO, NO! THE MONSTER'S TOUCH IS DEADLY!!
SO, MILADY, IS MINE!

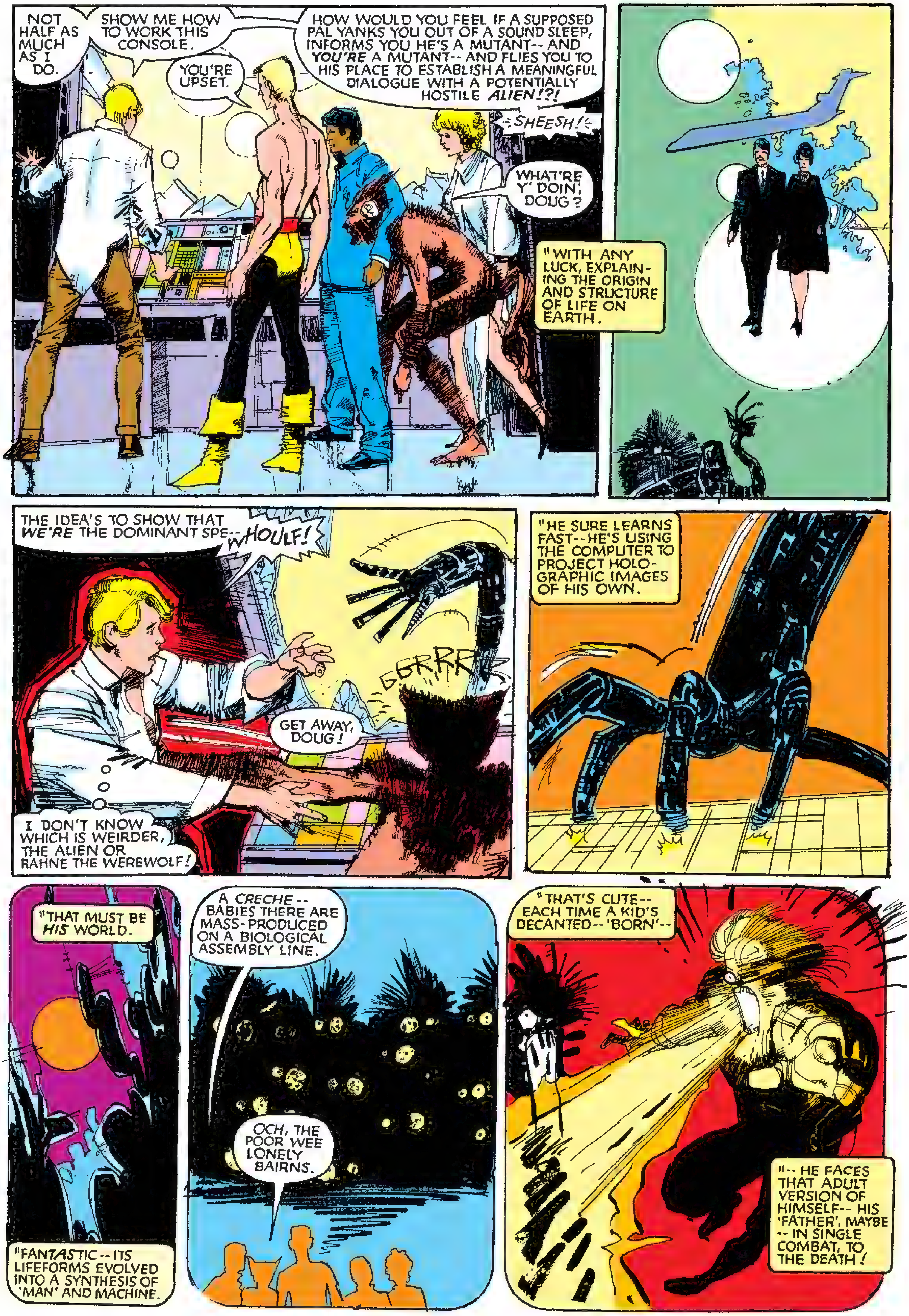
AIEEEEEROW
HE ISN'T INVULNERABLE, HE CAN BE *HURT!*
YEAH-- BUT NOW HE'S WOUNDED.
THAT COULD MAKE HIM MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER!
THE MUSIC'S SO LOUD, THANK HEAVEN, IT'S DROWNING OUT ANY SOUNDS OF BATTLE.
HOW DO THEY STAND THE NOISE, IT'S GIVING ME A HEADACHE-- *BLAST!*
NOT EVERYONE'S HERE, TWO GIRLS ARE *GONE!!*
PROB'LY OUT EXPLORING--
--I'VE HEARD MUTTERINGS ALONG THAT LINE ALL EVENING.
*OBOYOBOYOBOY*-- THE PARTS STILL WORK BUT THEY SURE AREN'T IN THE MOOD.
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, ALL THIS PAIN MEANS THE NERVES ARE HEALTHY.
*WHOOPS*-- CAN'T STAY UPRIGHT, MUSCLES WON'T HOLD ME!
SO MUCH FOR THIS IDEA, I'LL HAVE TO ALERT RAHNE...
*DANI, THE MONSTER'S TRAIL, IT'S LEADIN' BACK T' THE MANSION!*
I KNOW, RAHNEY.
I KNOW.

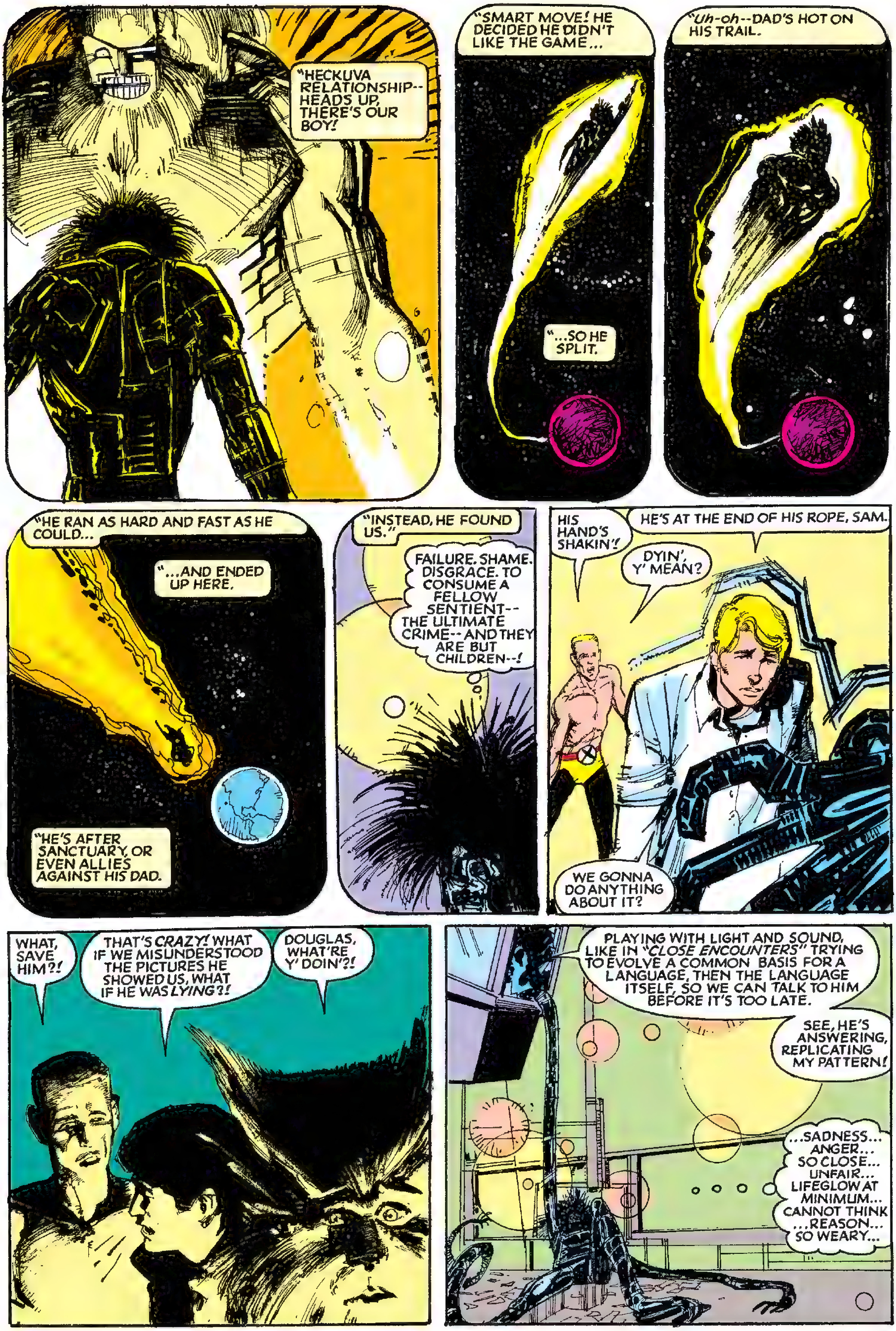

Hmnh--HE LOOKS AS ROCKY AS I DO.
RAHNE, CALM DOWN! STOP SHRIEKING IN MY MIND, I CAN'T CONCENTRATE!
I HAVE TO TAP INTO HIS THOUGHTS, DISCOVER WHATEVER SCARES HIM MOST, PRAY CONFRONTING HIM WITH IT'LL SCARE HIM AWAY. MY POWER ONLY WORKS ON SENTIENT BEINGS, THOUGH.
IF HE'S JUST A FANCY MACHINE, I'M DONE FOR!
BINGO!
FATHER!
MAGUS!!
NEGNEGNEGNEGNEG-
DANI--?!?
I'M FINE, RAHNEY, HONEST! I DIDN'T MEAN TO YELL BEFORE, BUT THINGS GOT PRETTY HAIRY--
--SHAPE-SHIFT, HONEY, NOW!
HOW'S TRICKS, DANI?
ELLEN, MARCIE--WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
HEY, WE'RE NOT DOIN' ANYTHING!
CUTE DOGGY.
¿PHAUGGH!¿
SHALL I SHOO 'EM INSIDE, DANI?
LATER, THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT--OUR VISITOR'S A PERSON, NOT A MACHINE OR BEAST. HE'S INTELLIGENT AND HE HAS FEELINGS, LIKE US! HE'S TERRIFIED OF ONE OF HIS OWN KIND--I THINK HE'S RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE!
HE'S GIVIN' OFF AN ODD SCENT, DANI, THAT I REACT TO THE SAME AS WHEN I SMELL FEAR IN PEOPLE.
Y'KNOW, FUZZY, HE COULD BE AS SCARED OF US AS WE ARE OF HIM. REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT YOUR FIRST WEEKS HERE--A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND, ALONE AND CONFUSED, IGNORANT OF THE LANGUAGE AND CUSTOMS?
RAHNE, IF ALL HE KNOWS ARE BEINGS LIKE HIMSELF, HE MIGHT NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE US AS PEOPLE! HE MAY BELIEVE WE'RE ANIMALS!

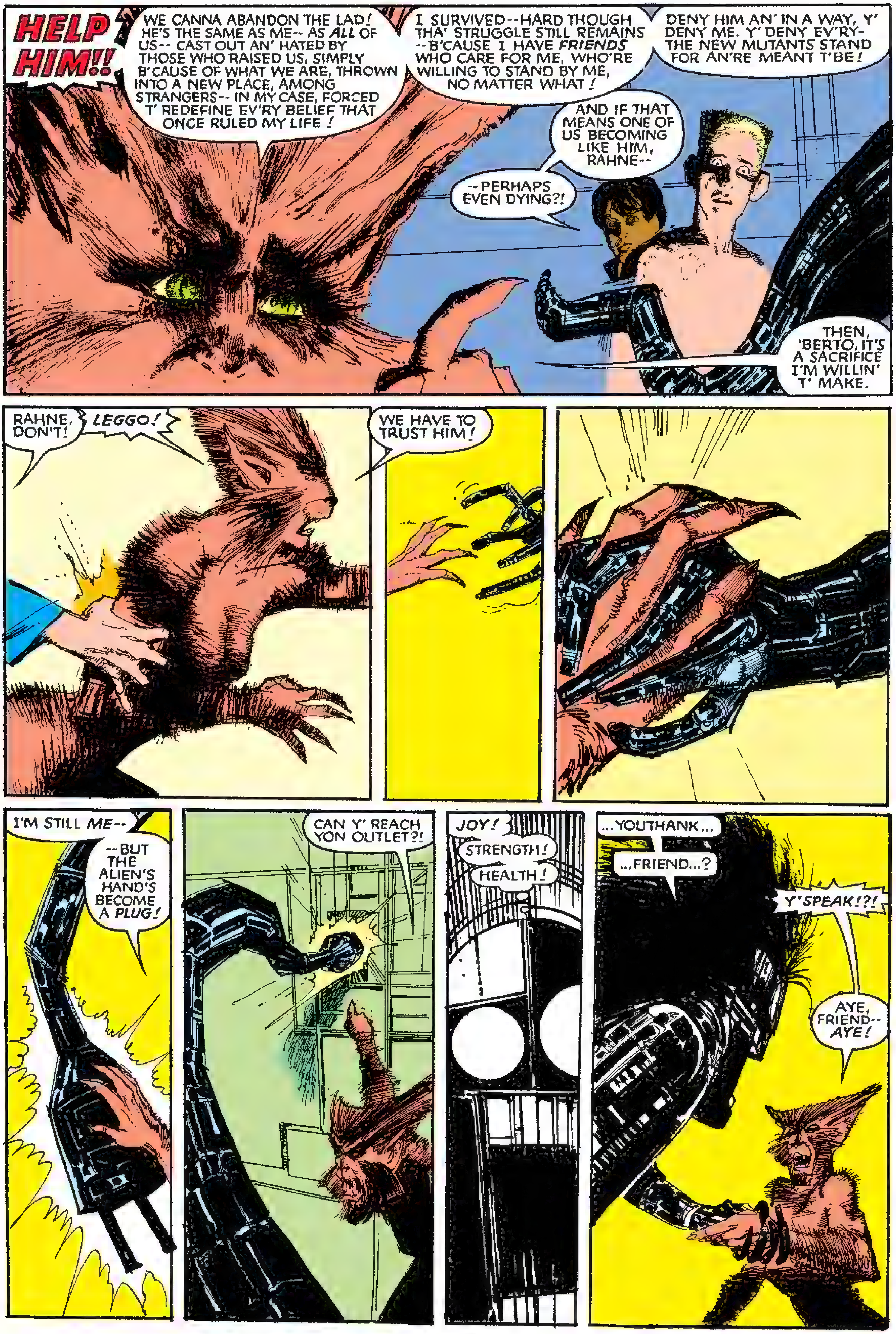

WHERE'S THE DOG GOING?
ACTUALLY, ELLEN, SHE'S A WOLF.
HEY, LIKE IN *"ELFQUEST?"* THAT'S RAD, DANI! AN' YOU'VE GOT IT TRAINED AN' EVERYTHING!
*TELL THE OTHERS WHAT I FIGURED OUT, RAHNE--THEY'RE NOT TO HURT OUR VISITOR UNLESS IT'S LIFE-OR-DEATH. THAT'S AN ORDER!*
YOU GIRLS HEADING BACK TO THE PARTY?
Oh, SURE-- HEY, LOOK!
IT'S A GUY, *FLYING!*
WHO IS IT? CAN YOU TELL, MARCIE?!
HE WENT BY TOO FAST-- BUT, ELLEN, HE WASN'T WEARING ANY *CLOTHES!*
REAL CUTE TUSH--LET'S SEE WHERE HE WENT.
GEE, DANI SOUNDED AWFULLY MAD.
YOU'D THINK SHE HAD SOMETHING TO HIDE.
WHERE ARE WE, MARCIE? I'M LOST.
ON THE MAIN FLOOR-- *ELLENNN!!*
EEEKKK!!
WHO'S SCREAMIN'--WHAT'S'A MATTER-- WHO THE DEVIL'RE *YOU?!!*
WHAT THE HECK IS *THAT?!?*
M-M-M-M-*MONSTER!!*
IT'S A STATUE, DUMMY.
TH' INTRUDER'S DOIN', AH'LL BET.

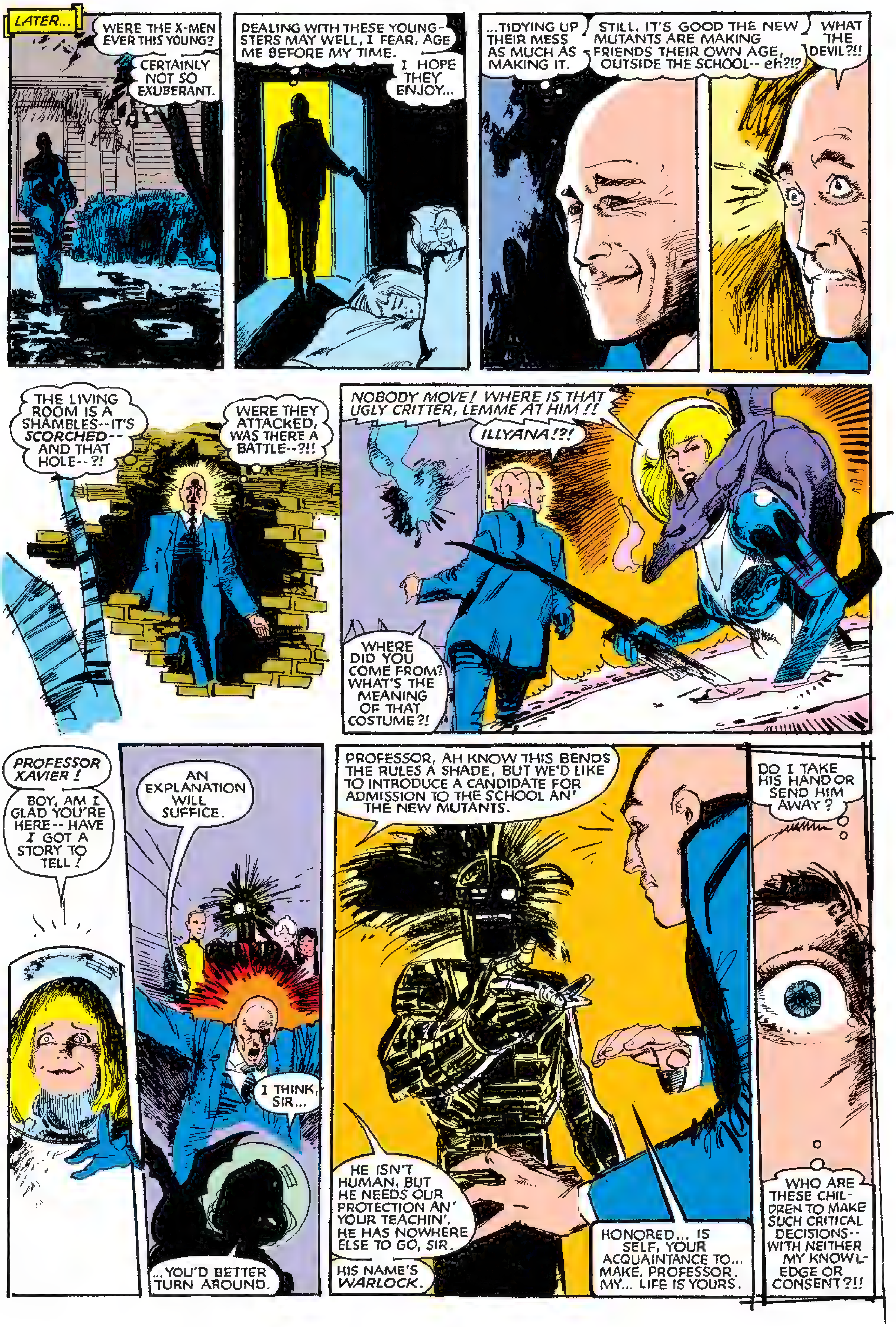

HOW 'BOUT YOU LADIES SCOOT TO THE ATTIC WHERE YOU B'LONG? WE HAD A POWER FAILURE-- 'MARA'S ALREADY HURT HERSELF BLUNDERIN' ABOUT IN TH' DARK-- WE GOT WORK TO DO, WE CAN'T BE WORRYIN' ABOUT DUMB LITTLE GIRLS WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER.
HEY, Y'KNOW, WE CAN TAKE A HINT, DON'T GET SO HYPER.
CREEP.
'BERTO, DO *I* ACT THAT SILLY AND THOUGHTLESS?
ON OCCASION, *MENINA*...
... WE ALL DO.
RAHNE, ANY SIGN OF OUR VISITOR?
HIS TRAIL LEADS DOWNSTAIRS, INTO THE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX BENEATH THE MANSION.
STANDS T' REASON, THAT'S WHERE THE ESTATE'S POWER'S GENERATED. MOSTLY, HE'S BEEN RADIATIN' A BLUE LIGHT-- THE GLOW GOT BRIGHTER AN' CHANGED COLOR WHENEVER HE ABSORBED LIFE ENERGY, BUT THAT DIDN'T LAST.
CRITTER'S HUNGRY, MAYBE EVEN STARVIN'.
AND WE'RE HIS DINNER?
MAYBE. BUT TURN THINGS AROUND-- PUT OURSELVES IN HIS SHOES-- WE'RE IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY, WE'RE HUNGRY, SCARED, DON'T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE AN' EV'RYBODY WE MEET TRIES T' PUNCH OUR LIGHTS OUT. WOULD WE BEHAVE ANY DIFFERENTLY?
*RAHNE, PASS THIS ON TO THE OTHERS: SAM'S THOUGHTS ECHO MY OWN. WE MAY'VE JUMPED TO THE WRONG CONCLUSIONS-- BEFORE WE DO ANY MORE, WE HAVE TO BE CERTAIN.*
BIGUGLYMONSTERTEETHCLAWS-SAMHUMPHJERK
*WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM.*
NO PROBLEM.
OUR FRIEND, ***DOUG RAMSEY***, IS A MUTANT, AN' HIS GIFT IS ***LANGUAGES***. TROUBLE IS, HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT US.
"DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BLOW OUR COVER WITHOUT ***PROFESSOR XAVIER'S*** PERMISSION? UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, DO WE HAVE A CHOICE?!"
*AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE CONTROL BOOTH OVERLOOKING THE* ***DANGER ROOM***, *WHEREIN BOTH* ***NEW MUTANTS*** *AND* ***X-MEN*** *HONE THEIR VARIOUS ABILITIES...*

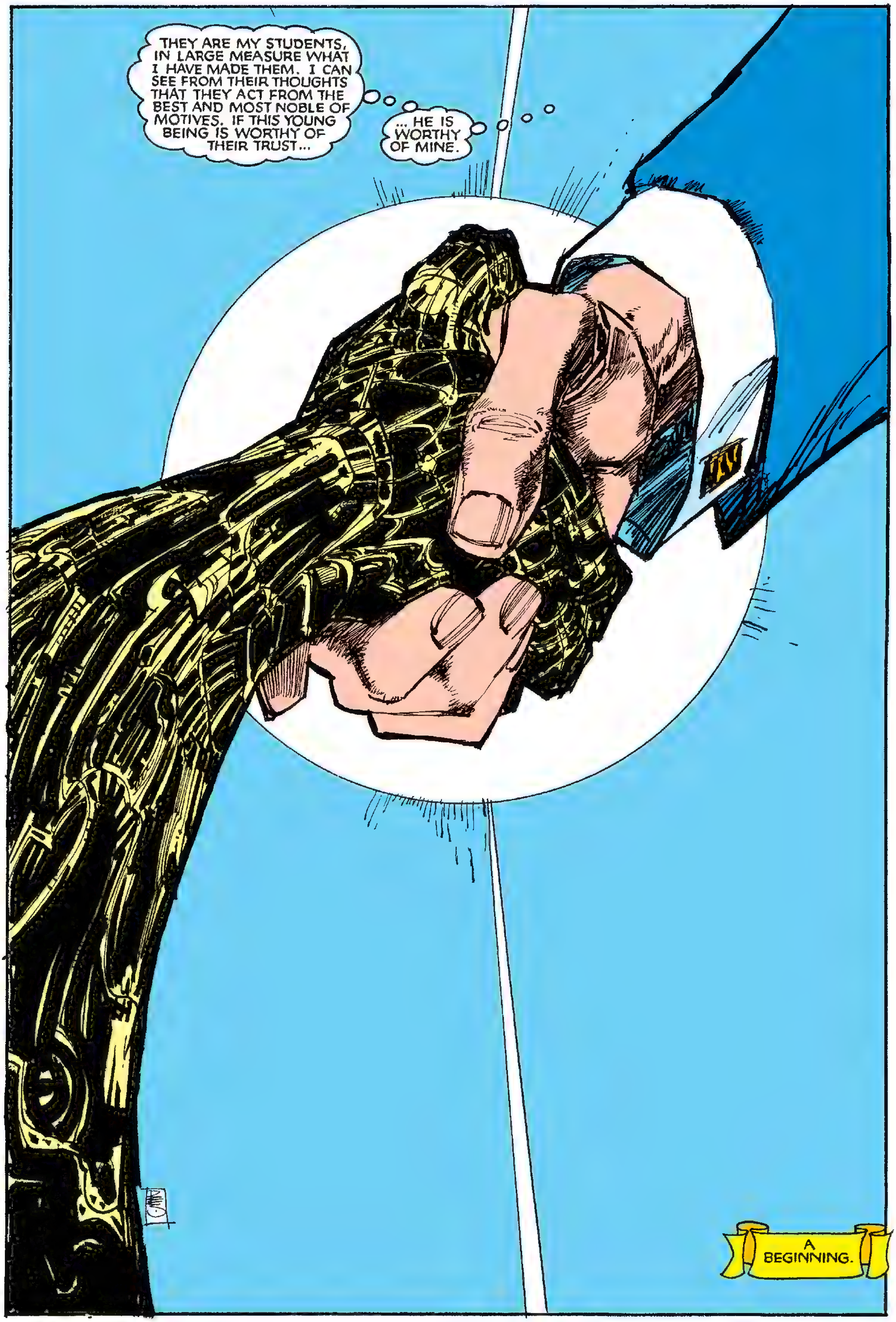

FORM RESTORED... FUNCTION DETERIORATING...
...GUARDIANS MOST TENACIOUS...DID NOT WISH... DESTROY THEM...
NEXUS... ENERGY SOURCE... FAR BELOW, DEEP WITHIN PLANETARY CRUST... TOO WEAK TO REACH IT...
...MUST ATTRACT ATTENTION...OF INHABITANTS-- EXPLAIN MYSELF.
TAK TAK TAK
TAK TAK TAK
TAK TAK TAK
HOWEVER, AS WARLOCK ACTIVATES THE COMPUTERS HE UNWITTINGLY ENGAGES THE ROOM'S ULTRA-SOPHISTICATED HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION SYSTEM, FILLING THE AIR AROUND HIM WITH A COLLAGE OF ABSTRACT IMAGES.
THEY COMPREHEND SIMPLE BINARY-- THEY ARE RESPONDING!
BUT ARE THOSE LIGHTS THEIR MEANS OF SPEECH, OR THE ENTITIES, THEMSELVES?
PLEASE-- AID ME, I BEG YOU...
...GRANT ME SANCTUARY!
CRASH
CAN...DUPLICATE LIGHTS--BUT...NO IDEA WHAT I AM SAYING.
DO THEY UNDERSTAND? DO THEY CARE?!
PERHAPS...IT IS AS MAGUSFATHER SAYS: I AM NOT FIT TO LIVE.
HE DOESN'T LOOK SO SCARY NOW-- KIND OF PATHETIC, ACTUALLY-- WHAT'S HE DOING?
TALKING, PROBABLY.
DOUG! HELLO!
THIS IS CRAZY, BOBBY, OR I AM. A DREAM, MAYBE--
--OR ONE OF YOUR IDIOT PRACTICAL JOKES?
I WISH!

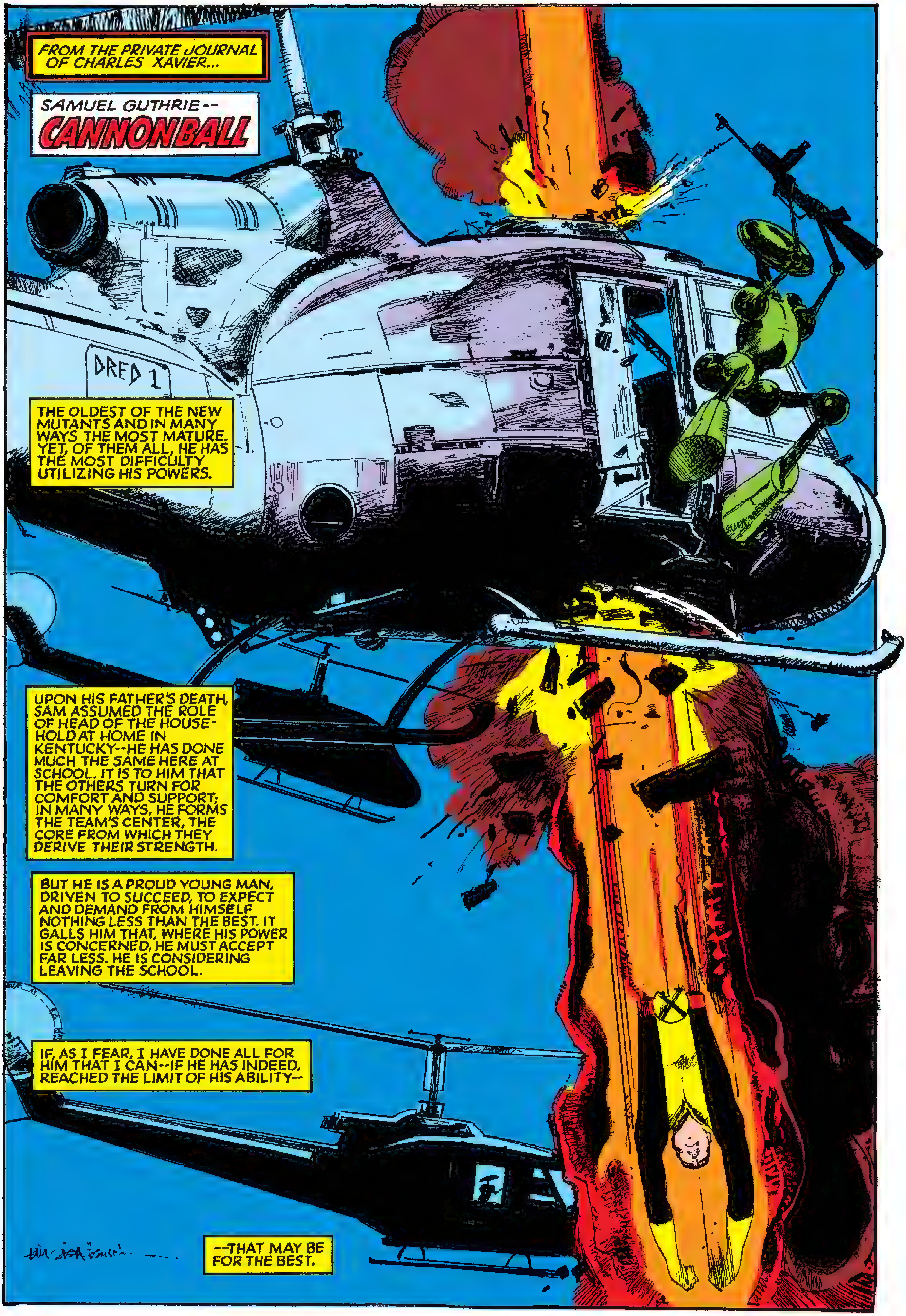

NOT HALF AS MUCH AS I DO.
SHOW ME HOW TO WORK THIS CONSOLE.
YOU'RE UPSET.
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF A SUPPOSED PAL YANKS YOU OUT OF A SOUND SLEEP, INFORMS YOU HE'S A MUTANT-- AND *YOU'RE* A MUTANT-- AND FLIES YOU TO HIS PLACE TO ESTABLISH A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH A POTENTIALLY HOSTILE *ALIEN!?!*
SHEESH!
WHAT'RE Y' DOIN', DOUG?
"WITH ANY LUCK, EXPLAINING THE ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF LIFE ON EARTH.
THE IDEA'S TO SHOW THAT *WE'RE* THE DOMINANT SPE--
WHOULF!
GRRRR
GET AWAY, DOUG!
I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WEIRDER, THE ALIEN OR RAHNE THE WEREWOLF!
"HE SURE LEARNS FAST--HE'S USING THE COMPUTER TO PROJECT HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF HIS OWN.
"THAT MUST BE *HIS* WORLD.
"FANTASTIC--ITS LIFEFORMS EVOLVED INTO A SYNTHESIS OF 'MAN' AND MACHINE.
A *CRECHE*--BABIES THERE ARE MASS-PRODUCED ON A BIOLOGICAL ASSEMBLY LINE.
OCH, THE POOR WEE LONELY BAIRNS.
"THAT'S CUTE--EACH TIME A KID'S DECANTED--'BORN'--
"--HE FACES THAT ADULT VERSION OF HIMSELF--HIS 'FATHER', MAYBE--IN SINGLE COMBAT, TO THE DEATH!


"HECKUVA RELATIONSHIP-- HEADS UP, THERE'S OUR BOY!
"SMART MOVE! HE DECIDED HE DIDN'T LIKE THE GAME...
"...SO HE SPLIT.
"Uh-oh--DAD'S HOT ON HIS TRAIL.
"HE RAN AS HARD AND FAST AS HE COULD...
"...AND ENDED UP HERE.
"HE'S AFTER SANCTUARY, OR EVEN ALLIES AGAINST HIS DAD.
"INSTEAD, HE FOUND US."
FAILURE. SHAME. DISGRACE. TO CONSUME A FELLOW SENTIENT-- THE ULTIMATE CRIME-- AND THEY ARE BUT CHILDREN--!
HIS HAND'S SHAKIN'!
HE'S AT THE END OF HIS ROPE, SAM.
DYIN', Y' MEAN?
WE GONNA DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
WHAT, SAVE HIM?!
THAT'S CRAZY! WHAT IF WE MISUNDERSTOOD THE PICTURES HE SHOWED US, WHAT IF HE WAS LYING?!
DOUGLAS, WHAT'RE Y' DOIN'?!
PLAYING WITH LIGHT AND SOUND, LIKE IN "CLOSE ENCOUNTERS" TRYING TO EVOLVE A COMMON BASIS FOR A LANGUAGE, THEN THE LANGUAGE ITSELF, SO WE CAN TALK TO HIM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
SEE, HE'S ANSWERING, REPLICATING MY PATTERN!
...SADNESS... ANGER... SO CLOSE... UNFAIR... LIFEGLOW AT MINIMUM... CANNOT THINK ...REASON... SO WEARY...

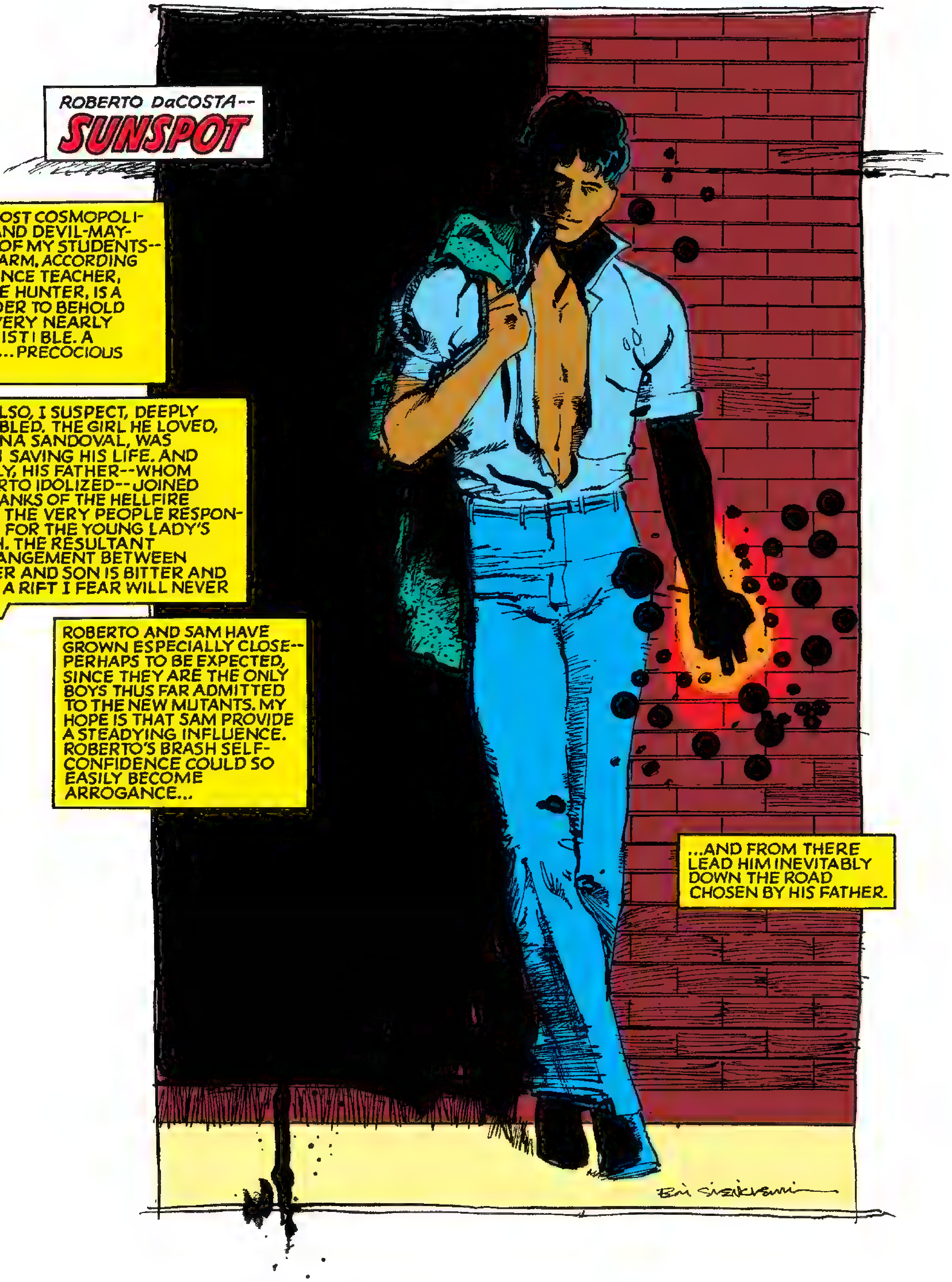

HELP HIM!!
WE CANNA ABANDON THE LAD! HE'S THE SAME AS ME-- AS ALL OF US-- CAST OUT AN' HATED BY THOSE WHO RAISED US, SIMPLY B'CAUSE OF WHAT WE ARE, THROWN INTO A NEW PLACE, AMONG STRANGERS-- IN MY CASE, FORCED T' REDEFINE EV'RY BELIEF THAT ONCE RULED MY LIFE!
I SURVIVED--HARD THOUGH THA' STRUGGLE STILL REMAINS --B'CAUSE I HAVE FRIENDS WHO CARE FOR ME, WHO'RE WILLING TO STAND BY ME, NO MATTER WHAT!
DENY HIM AN' IN A WAY, Y' DENY ME. Y' DENY EV'RY- THE NEW MUTANTS STAND FOR AN'RE MEANT T'BE!
AND IF THAT MEANS ONE OF US BECOMING LIKE HIM, RAHNE--
--PERHAPS EVEN DYING?!
THEN, 'BERTO, IT'S A SACRIFICE I'M WILLIN' T' MAKE.
RAHNE, DON'T!
LEGGO!
WE HAVE TO TRUST HIM!
I'M STILL ME--
--BUT THE ALIEN'S HAND'S BECOME A PLUG!
CAN Y' REACH YON OUTLET?!
JOY!
STRENGTH!
HEALTH!
...YOUTHANK...
...FRIEND...?
Y'SPEAK!?!
AYE, FRIEND-- AYE!


LATER...
WERE THE X-MEN EVER THIS YOUNG?
CERTAINLY NOT SO EXUBERANT.
DEALING WITH THESE YOUNGSTERS MAY WELL, I FEAR, AGE ME BEFORE MY TIME.
I HOPE THEY ENJOY...
...TIDYING UP THEIR MESS AS MUCH AS MAKING IT.
STILL, IT'S GOOD THE NEW MUTANTS ARE MAKING FRIENDS THEIR OWN AGE, OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL-- eh?!?
WHAT THE DEVIL?!!
THE LIVING ROOM IS A SHAMBLES--IT'S SCORCHED-- AND THAT HOLE--?!
WERE THEY ATTACKED, WAS THERE A BATTLE--?!!
NOBODY MOVE! WHERE IS THAT UGLY CRITTER, LEMME AT HIM!!
ILLYANA!?!
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THAT COSTUME?!
PROFESSOR XAVIER!
BOY, AM I GLAD YOU'RE HERE-- HAVE I GOT A STORY TO TELL!
AN EXPLANATION WILL SUFFICE.
I THINK, SIR...
...YOU'D BETTER TURN AROUND.
PROFESSOR, AH KNOW THIS BENDS THE RULES A SHADE, BUT WE'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE A CANDIDATE FOR ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL AN' THE NEW MUTANTS.
HE ISN'T HUMAN, BUT HE NEEDS OUR PROTECTION AN' YOUR TEACHIN'. HE HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO, SIR.
HIS NAME'S WARLOCK.
HONORED... IS SELF, YOUR ACQUAINTANCE TO... MAKE, PROFESSOR. MY... LIFE IS YOURS.
DO I TAKE HIS HAND OR SEND HIM AWAY?
WHO ARE THESE CHILDREN TO MAKE SUCH CRITICAL DECISIONS-- WITH NEITHER MY KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT?!!


THEY ARE MY STUDENTS, IN LARGE MEASURE WHAT I HAVE MADE THEM. I CAN SEE FROM THEIR THOUGHTS THAT THEY ACT FROM THE BEST AND MOST NOBLE OF MOTIVES. IF THIS YOUNG BEING IS WORTHY OF THEIR TRUST...
...HE IS WORTHY OF MINE.
A BEGINNING.


FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNAL OF CHARLES XAVIER...
SAMUEL GUTHRIE--
CANNONBALL
DRED 1
THE OLDEST OF THE NEW MUTANTS AND IN MANY WAYS THE MOST MATURE. YET, OF THEM ALL, HE HAS THE MOST DIFFICULTY UTILIZING HIS POWERS.
UPON HIS FATHER'S DEATH, SAM ASSUMED THE ROLE OF HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD AT HOME IN KENTUCKY--HE HAS DONE MUCH THE SAME HERE AT SCHOOL. IT IS TO HIM THAT THE OTHERS TURN FOR COMFORT AND SUPPORT; IN MANY WAYS, HE FORMS THE TEAM'S CENTER, THE CORE FROM WHICH THEY DERIVE THEIR STRENGTH.
BUT HE IS A PROUD YOUNG MAN, DRIVEN TO SUCCEED, TO EXPECT AND DEMAND FROM HIMSELF NOTHING LESS THAN THE BEST. IT GALLS HIM THAT, WHERE HIS POWER IS CONCERNED, HE MUST ACCEPT FAR LESS. HE IS CONSIDERING LEAVING THE SCHOOL.
IF, AS I FEAR, I HAVE DONE ALL FOR HIM THAT I CAN--IF HE HAS INDEED, REACHED THE LIMIT OF HIS ABILITY--
--THAT MAY BE FOR THE BEST.

ILLYANA NIKOLOVNA RASPUTIN--
MAGIK
A RIDDLE WRAPPED WITHIN AN ENIGNMA--
--HALF HER LIFETIME SPENT ON EARTH, HALF IN AN OTHER-DIMENSIONAL LIMBO, PRISONER AND DISCIPLE OF ITS DAEMONIC OVERLORD.
SHE IS A FORMIDABLE SORCERESS IN HER OWN RIGHT...
...AND A MUTANT AS WELL, ABLE TO TELEPORT THROUGH BOTH SPACE AND TIME. I KNOW TOO LITTLE TO PROPERLY EVALUATE HER ABILITIES AS THE ONE, AND AS FOR THE OTHER-- HOW DO I INSTRUCT HER WHEN NEITHER OF US...
...KNOWS PRECISELY WHERE, OR WHEN, HER POWER WILL TAKE HER?!
AND YET, SOMEHOW, I MUST FIND A WAY.
Bill Sienkiewicz 1984


ROBERTO DaCOSTA--
SUNSPOT
THE MOST COSMOPOLITAN AND DEVIL-MAY-CARE OF MY STUDENTS-- HIS CHARM, ACCORDING HIS DANCE TEACHER, STEVIE HUNTER, IS A WONDER TO BEHOLD AND VERY NEARLY IRRESISTIBLE. A MOST... PRECOCIOUS LAD.
BUT ALSO, I SUSPECT, DEEPLY TROUBLED. THE GIRL HE LOVED, JULIANA SANDOVAL, WAS SLAIN SAVING HIS LIFE. AND LATELY, HIS FATHER--WHOM ROBERTO IDOLIZED--JOINED THE RANKS OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB, THE VERY PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE YOUNG LADY'S DEATH. THE RESULTANT ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN FATHER AND SON IS BITTER AND DEEP, A RIFT I FEAR WILL NEVER HEAL.
ROBERTO AND SAM HAVE GROWN ESPECIALLY CLOSE-- PERHAPS TO BE EXPECTED, SINCE THEY ARE THE ONLY BOYS THUS FAR ADMITTED TO THE NEW MUTANTS. MY HOPE IS THAT SAM PROVIDE A STEADYING INFLUENCE. ROBERTO'S BRASH SELF-CONFIDENCE COULD SO EASILY BECOME ARROGANCE...
...AND FROM THERE LEAD HIM INEVITABLY DOWN THE ROAD CHOSEN BY HIS FATHER.

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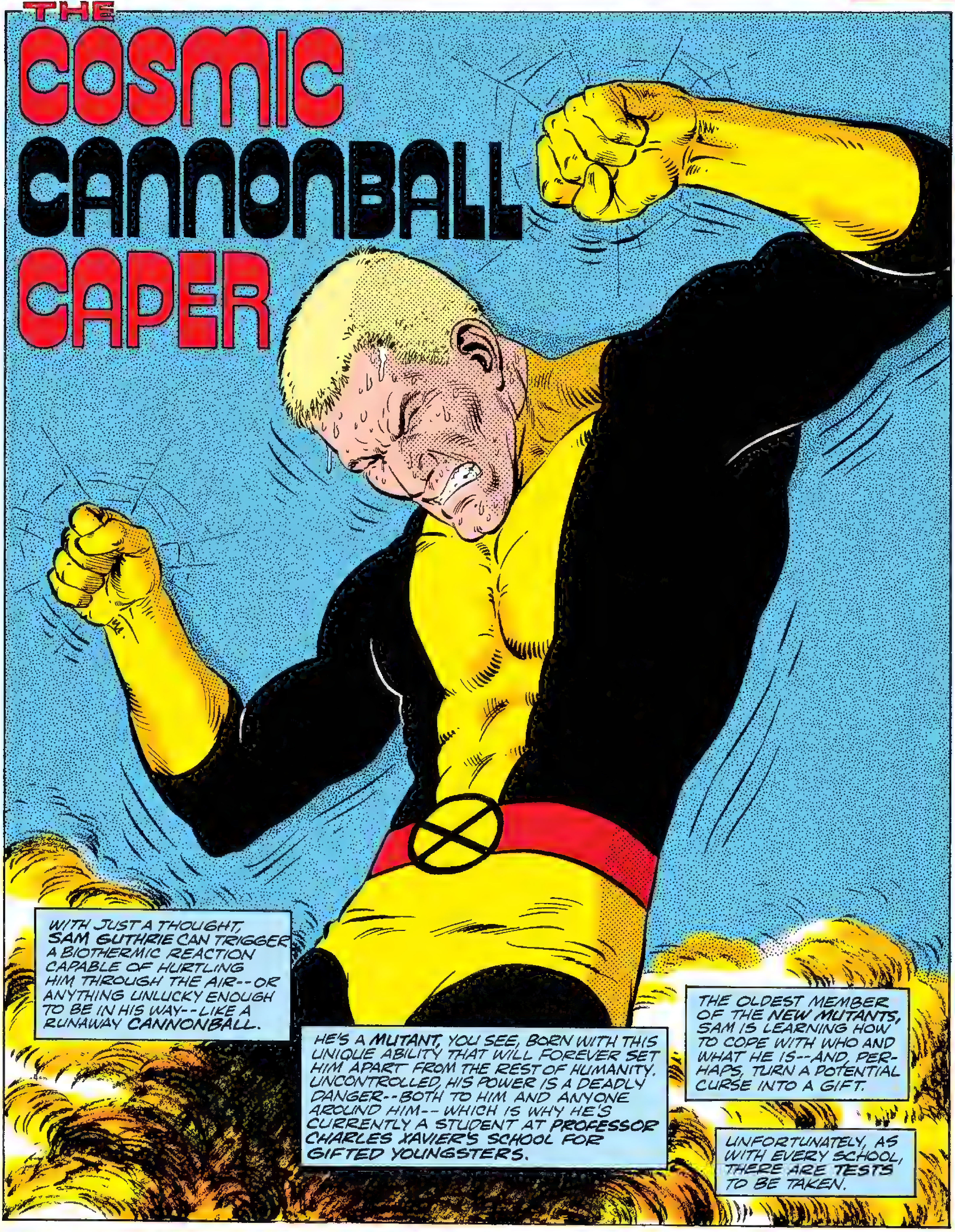
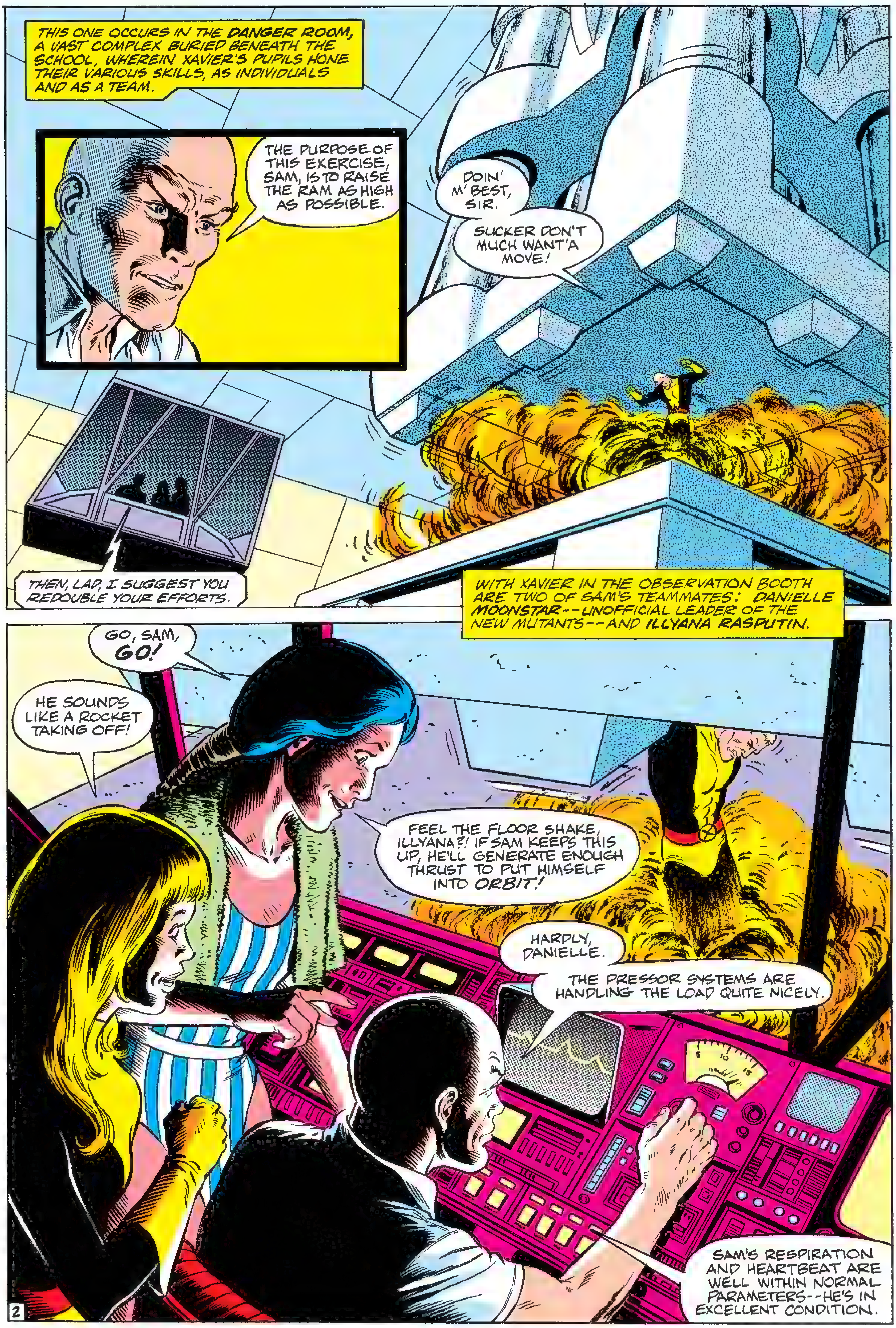
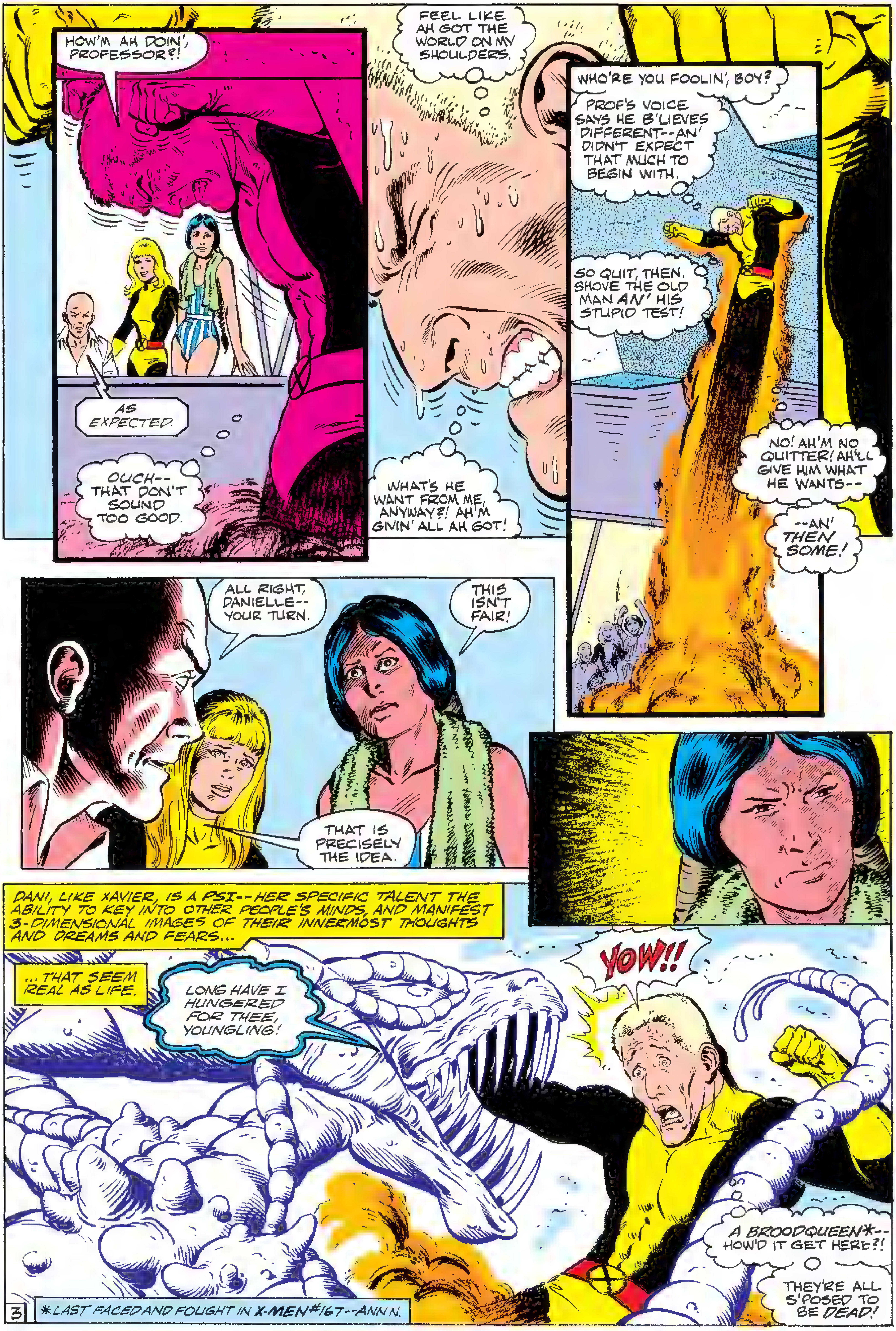
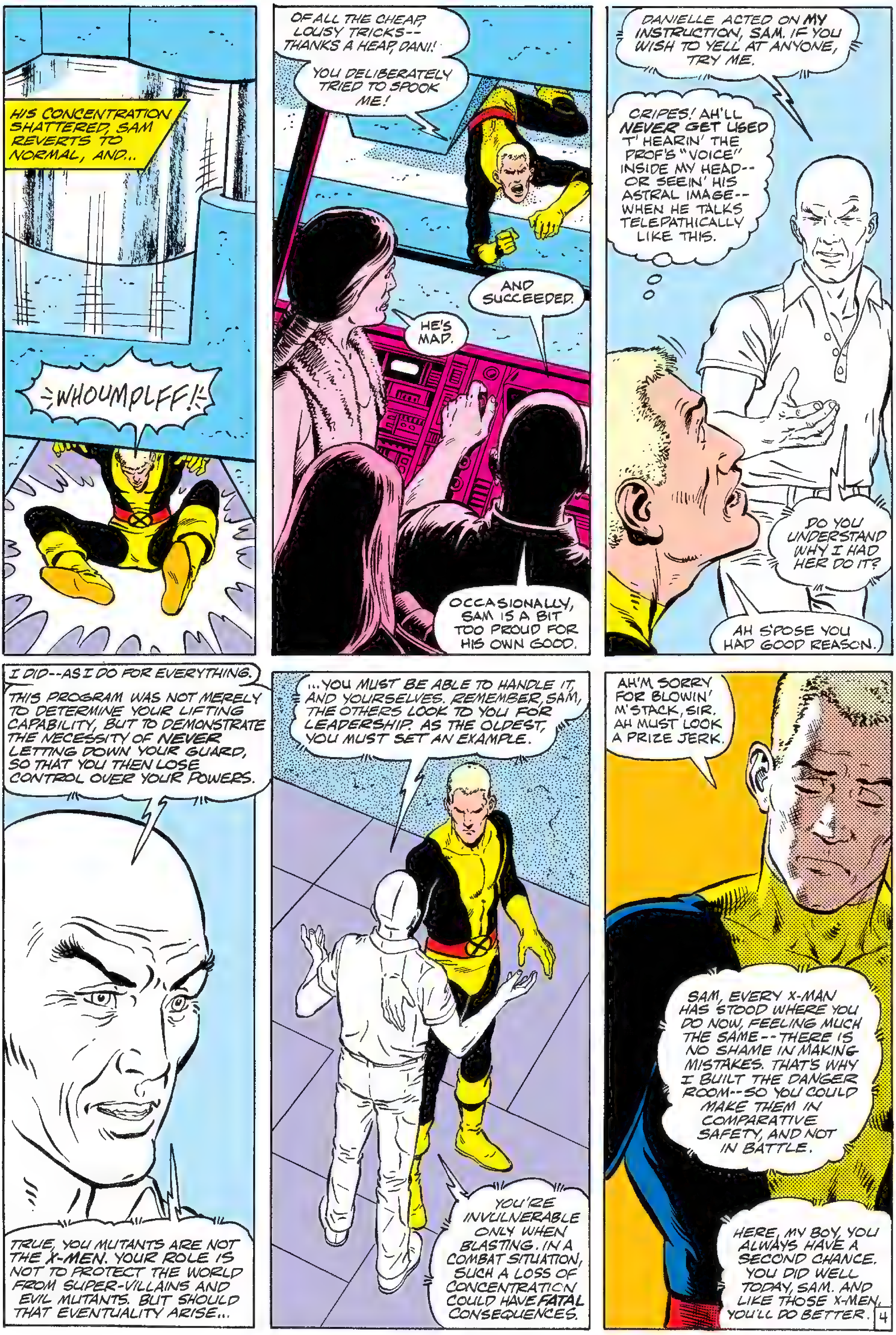
THE NEW MUTANTS ANNUAL™
STEAL THIS PLANET!
a rock fable

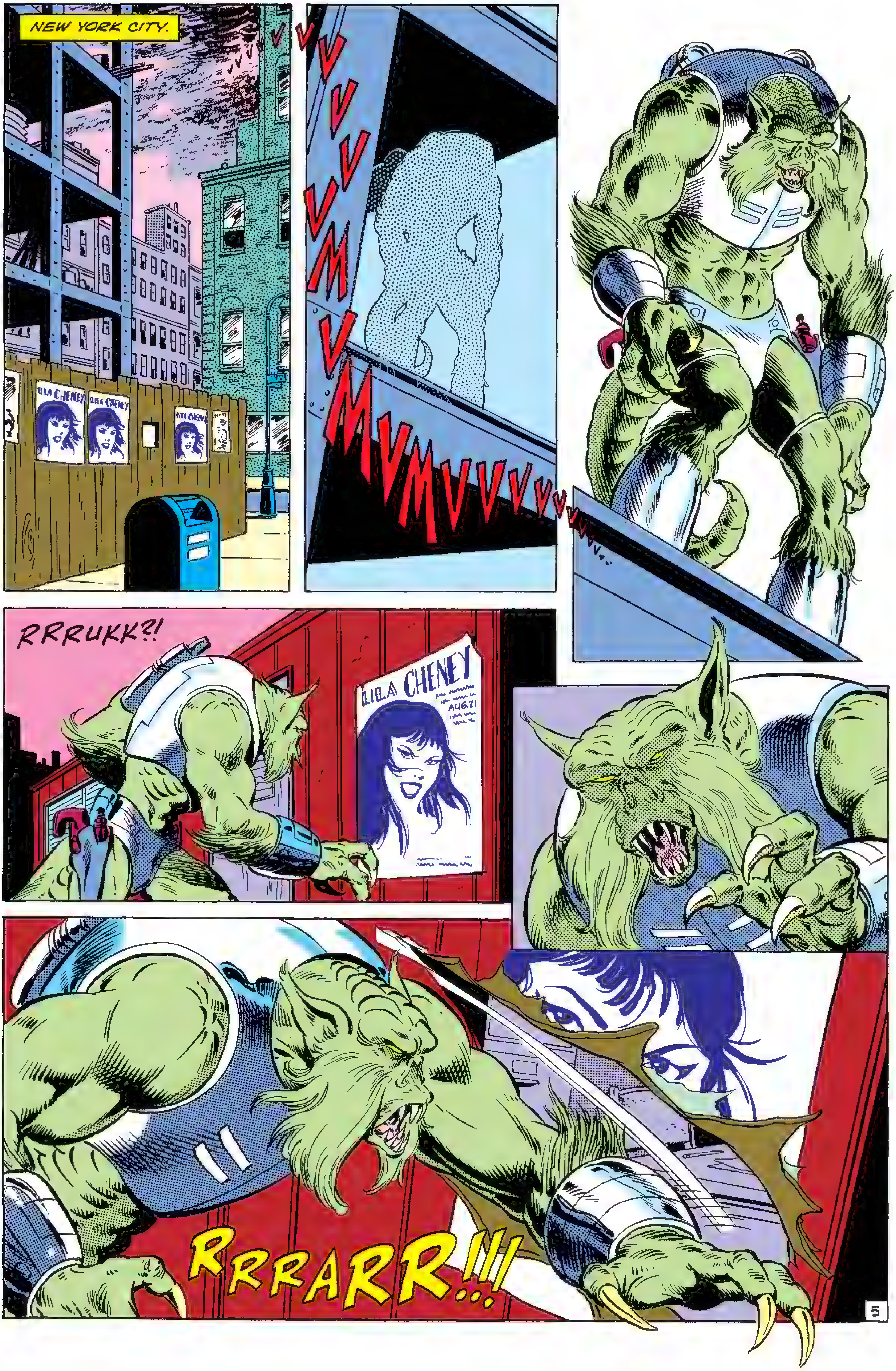
STAN LEE PRESENTER
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER- BOB McLEOD CO-CREATORS-ARTIST McLEOD & PALMER INKERS McLEOD-LETTERER SHAREN-COLORIST ANN NOCENTI EDITOR JIM SHOOTER CHIEF
THE NEW MUTANTS STARS

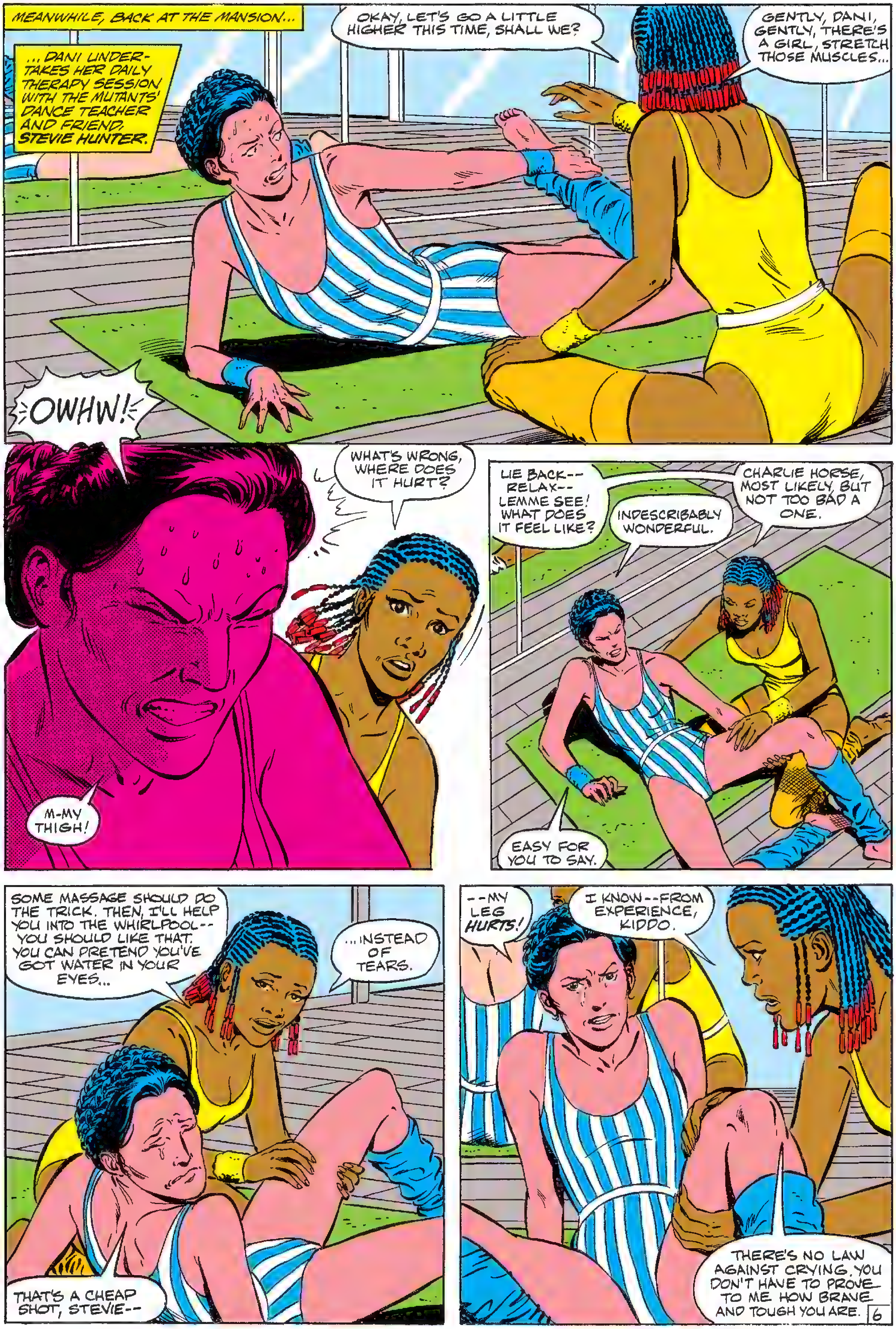

THE COSMIC CANNONBALL CAPER
WITH JUST A THOUGHT, SAM GUTHRIE CAN TRIGGER A BIOTHERMIC REACTION CAPABLE OF HURTLING HIM THROUGH THE AIR--OR ANYTHING UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO BE IN HIS WAY--LIKE A RUNAWAY CANNONBALL.
HE'S A MUTANT, YOU SEE, BORN WITH THIS UNIQUE ABILITY THAT WILL FOREVER SET HIM APART FROM THE REST OF HUMANITY. UNCONTROLLED, HIS POWER IS A DEADLY DANGER--BOTH TO HIM AND ANYONE AROUND HIM-- WHICH IS WHY HE'S CURRENTLY A STUDENT AT PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
THE OLDEST MEMBER OF THE NEW MUTANTS, SAM IS LEARNING HOW TO COPE WITH WHO AND WHAT HE IS--AND, PERHAPS, TURN A POTENTIAL CURSE INTO A GIFT.
UNFORTUNATELY, AS WITH EVERY SCHOOL, THERE ARE TESTS TO BE TAKEN.

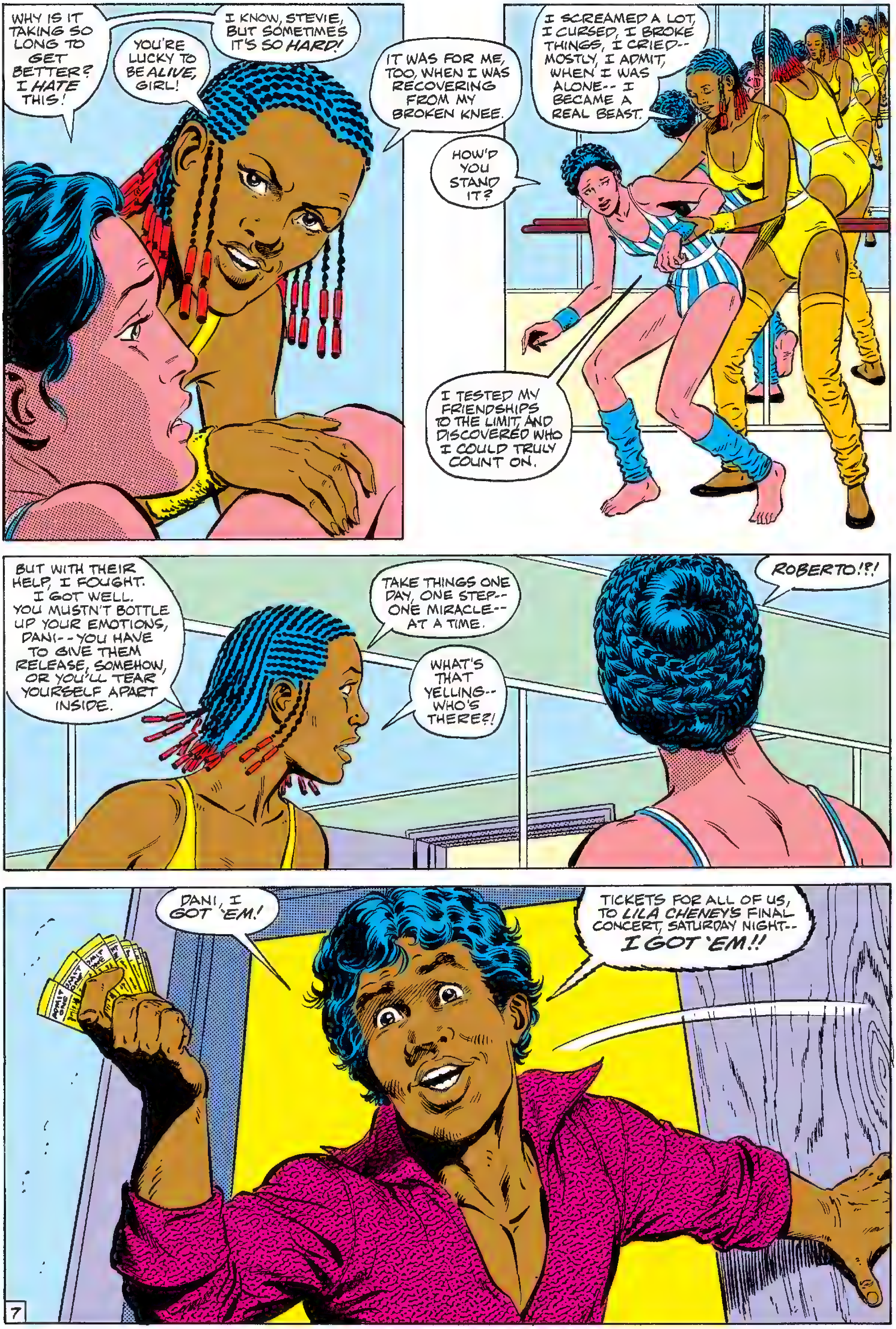

THIS ONE OCCURS IN THE **DANGER ROOM**, A VAST COMPLEX BURIED BENEATH THE SCHOOL, WHEREIN XAVIER'S PUPILS HONE THEIR VARIOUS SKILLS, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A TEAM.
THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXERCISE, SAM, IS TO RAISE THE RAM AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE.
DOIN' M' BEST, SIR.
SUCKER DON'T MUCH WANT'A MOVE!
THEN, LAD, I SUGGEST YOU REDOUBLE YOUR EFFORTS.
WITH XAVIER IN THE OBSERVATION BOOTH ARE TWO OF SAM'S TEAMMATES: **DANIELLE MOONSTAR**--UNOFFICIAL LEADER OF THE NEW MUTANTS--AND **ILLYANA RASPUTIN**.
GO, SAM, **GO!**
HE SOUNDS LIKE A ROCKET TAKING OFF!
FEEL THE FLOOR SHAKE, ILLYANA?! IF SAM KEEPS THIS UP, HE'LL GENERATE ENOUGH THRUST TO PUT HIMSELF INTO **ORBIT!**
HARDLY, DANIELLE.
THE PRESSOR SYSTEMS ARE HANDLING THE LOAD QUITE NICELY.
SAM'S RESPIRATION AND HEARTBEAT ARE WELL WITHIN NORMAL PARAMETERS--HE'S IN EXCELLENT CONDITION.

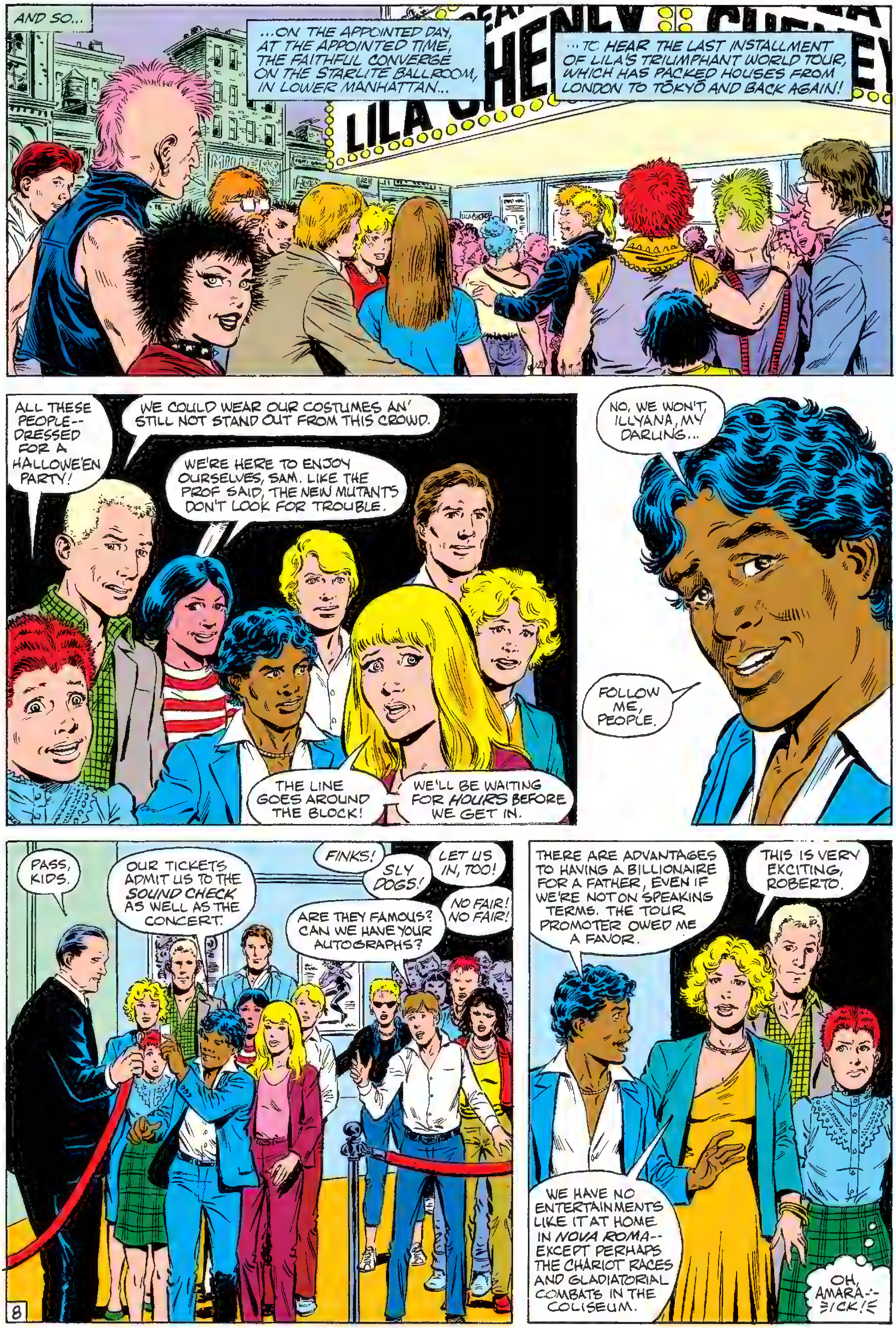

HOW'M AH DOIN', PROFESSOR?!
AS EXPECTED.
OUCH-- THAT DON'T SOUND TOO GOOD.
FEEL LIKE AH GOT THE WORLD ON MY SHOULDERS.
WHAT'S HE WANT FROM ME, ANYWAY?! AH'M GIVIN' ALL AH GOT!
WHO'RE YOU FOOLIN', BOY?
PROF'S VOICE SAYS HE B'LIEVES DIFFERENT--AN' DIDN'T EXPECT THAT MUCH TO BEGIN WITH.
SO QUIT, THEN. SHOVE THE OLD MAN AN' HIS STUPID TEST!
NO! AH'M NO QUITTER! AH'LL GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS--
--AN' THEN SOME!
ALL RIGHT, DANIELLE-- YOUR TURN.
THIS ISN'T FAIR!
THAT IS PRECISELY THE IDEA.
DANI, LIKE XAVIER, IS A PSI--HER SPECIFIC TALENT THE ABILITY TO KEY INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS, AND MANIFEST 3-DIMENSIONAL IMAGES OF THEIR INNERMOST THOUGHTS AND DREAMS AND FEARS...
...THAT SEEM REAL AS LIFE.
LONG HAVE I HUNGERED FOR THEE, YOUNGLING!
YOW!!
A BROODQUEEN*-- HOW'D IT GET HERE?!
THEY'RE ALL S'POSED TO BE DEAD!
3
*LAST FACED AND FOUGHT IN X-MEN #167--ANN N.

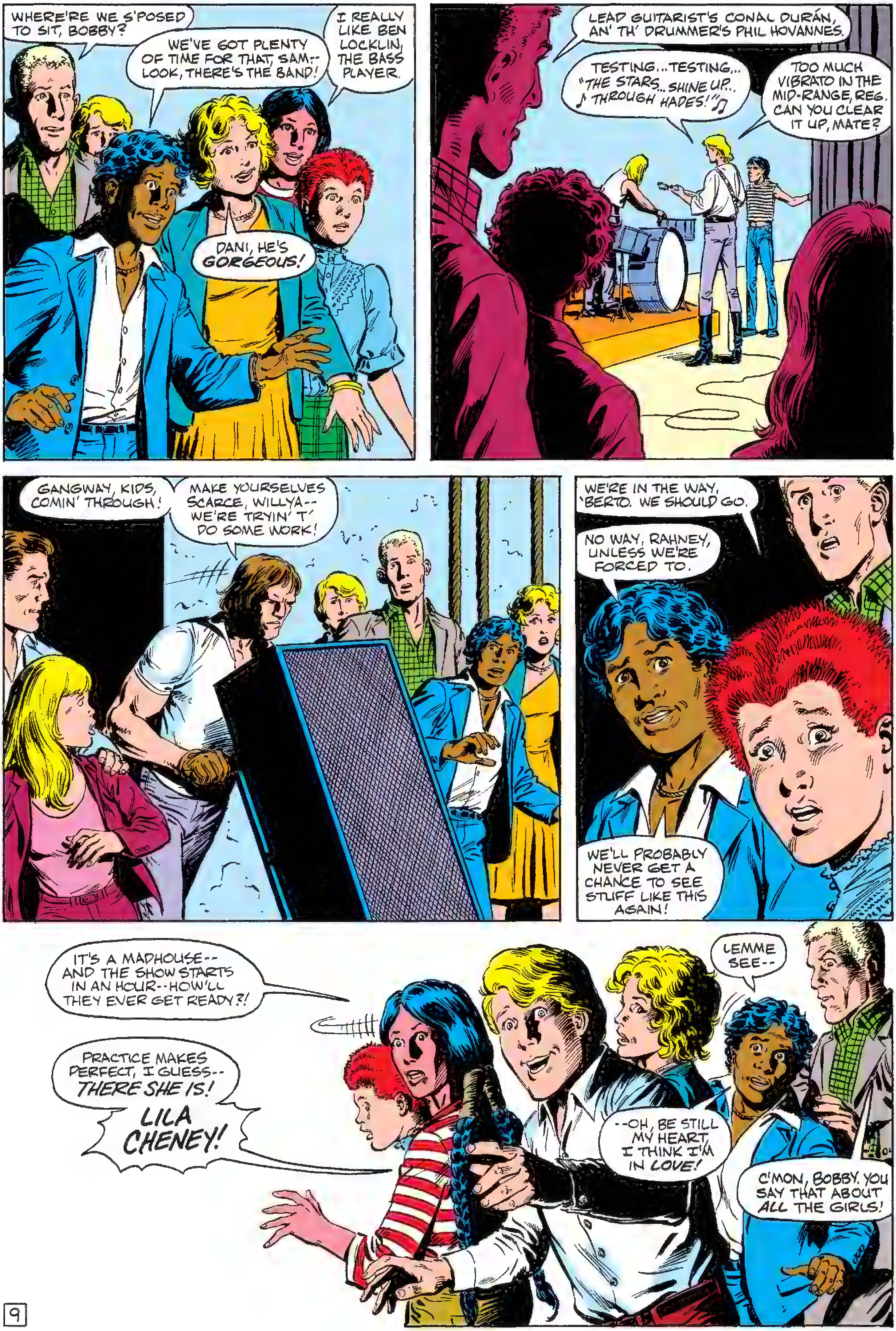

HIS CONCENTRATION SHATTERED, SAM REVERTS TO NORMAL, AND...
WHOUMPLFF!
OF ALL THE CHEAP, LOUSY TRICKS-- THANKS A HEAP, DANI!
YOU DELIBERATELY TRIED TO SPOOK ME!
AND SUCCEEDED.
HE'S MAD.
OCCASIONALLY, SAM IS A BIT TOO PROUD FOR HIS OWN GOOD.
DANIELLE ACTED ON MY INSTRUCTION, SAM. IF YOU WISH TO YELL AT ANYONE, TRY ME.
CRIPES! AH'LL NEVER GET USED T' HEARIN' THE PROF'S "VOICE" INSIDE MY HEAD-- OR SEEIN' HIS ASTRAL IMAGE-- WHEN HE TALKS TELEPATHICALLY LIKE THIS.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I HAD HER DO IT?
AH S'POSE YOU HAD GOOD REASON.
I DID--AS I DO FOR EVERYTHING.
THIS PROGRAM WAS NOT MERELY TO DETERMINE YOUR LIFTING CAPABILITY, BUT TO DEMONSTRATE THE NECESSITY OF NEVER LETTING DOWN YOUR GUARD, SO THAT YOU THEN LOSE CONTROL OVER YOUR POWERS.
TRUE, YOU MUTANTS ARE NOT THE X-MEN. YOUR ROLE IS NOT TO PROTECT THE WORLD FROM SUPER-VILLAINS AND EVIL MUTANTS. BUT SHOULD THAT EVENTUALITY ARISE...
...YOU MUST BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT, AND YOURSELVES. REMEMBER, SAM, THE OTHERS LOOK TO YOU FOR LEADERSHIP. AS THE OLDEST, YOU MUST SET AN EXAMPLE.
YOU'RE INVULNERABLE ONLY WHEN BLASTING. IN A COMBAT SITUATION, SUCH A LOSS OF CONCENTRATION COULD HAVE FATAL CONSEQUENCES.
AH'M SORRY FOR BLOWIN' M'STACK, SIR. AH MUST LOOK A PRIZE JERK.
SAM, EVERY X-MAN HAS STOOD WHERE YOU DO NOW, FEELING MUCH THE SAME--THERE IS NO SHAME IN MAKING MISTAKES. THAT'S WHY I BUILT THE DANGER ROOM--SO YOU COULD MAKE THEM IN COMPARATIVE SAFETY, AND NOT IN BATTLE.
HERE, MY BOY, YOU ALWAYS HAVE A SECOND CHANCE. YOU DID WELL TODAY, SAM. AND LIKE THOSE X-MEN, YOU'LL DO BETTER.

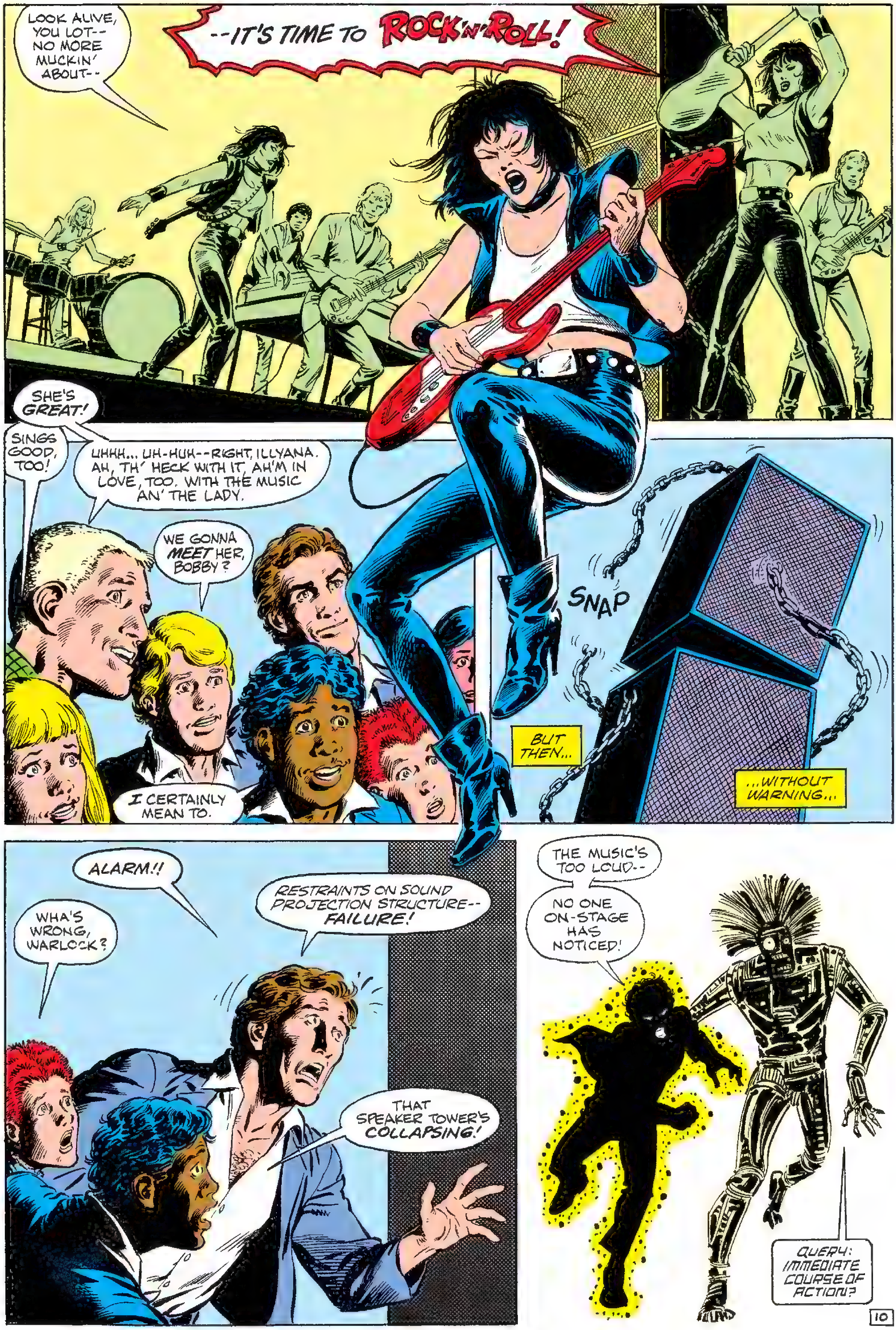

NEW YORK CITY.
LILA CHENEY
LILA CHENEY
LILA CHENEY
VVVVVVVMVMVVVVVVVV...
RRRUKK?!
LILA CHENEY
AUG 21
RRRARR!!!

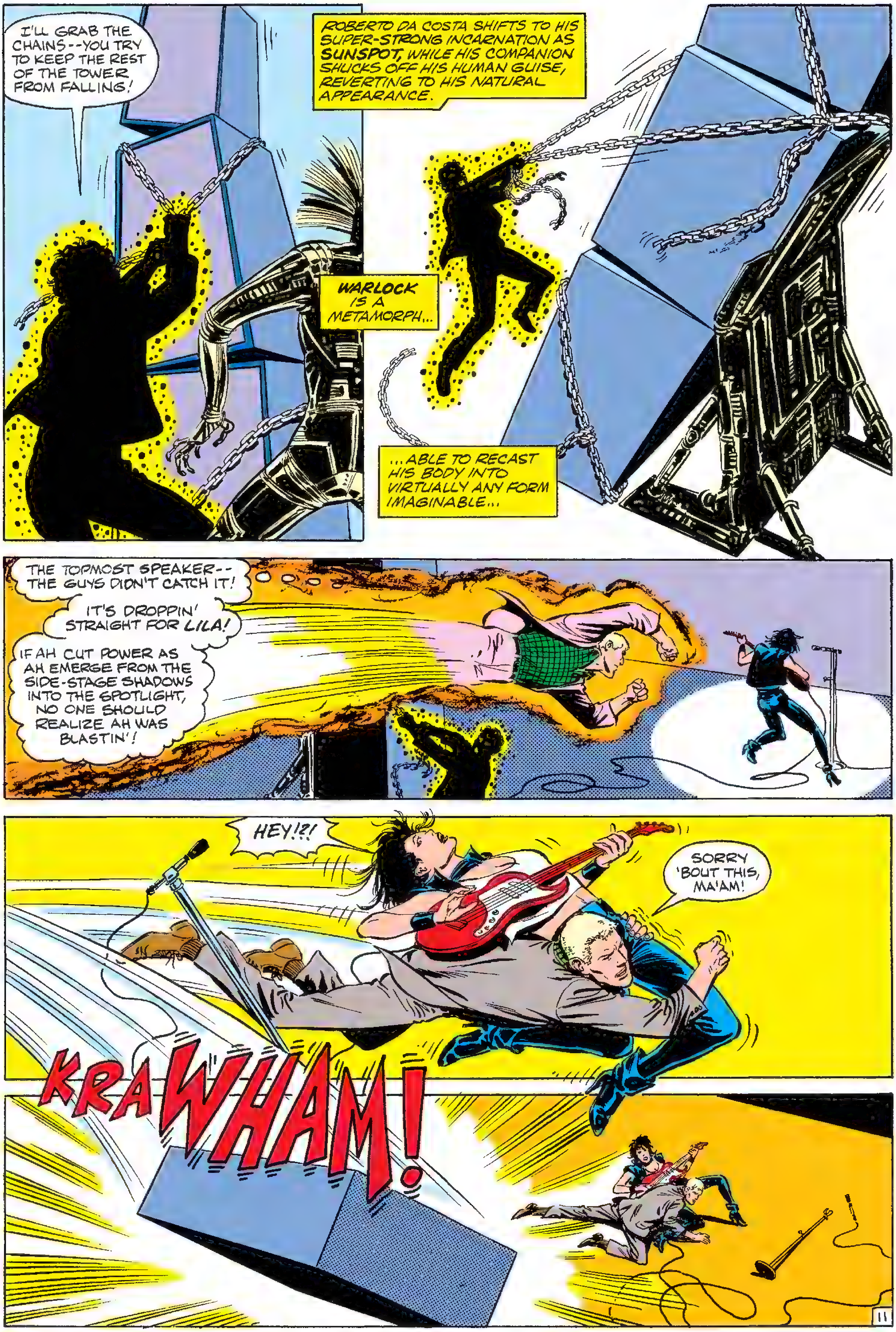

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE MANSION...
...DANI UNDERTAKES HER DAILY THERAPY SESSION WITH THE MUTANTS' DANCE TEACHER AND FRIEND, STEVIE HUNTER.
OKAY, LET'S GO A LITTLE HIGHER THIS TIME, SHALL WE?
GENTLY, DANI, GENTLY, THERE'S A GIRL, STRETCH THOSE MUSCLES...
OWHW!
WHAT'S WRONG, WHERE DOES IT HURT?
M-MY THIGH!
LIE BACK--RELAX--LEMME SEE! WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?
INDESCRIBABLY WONDERFUL.
CHARLIE HORSE, MOST LIKELY, BUT NOT TOO BAD A ONE.
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
SOME MASSAGE SHOULD DO THE TRICK. THEN, I'LL HELP YOU INTO THE WHIRLPOOL--YOU SHOULD LIKE THAT. YOU CAN PRETEND YOU'VE GOT WATER IN YOUR EYES...
...INSTEAD OF TEARS.
THAT'S A CHEAP SHOT, STEVIE--
--MY LEG HURTS!
I KNOW--FROM EXPERIENCE, KIDDO.
THERE'S NO LAW AGAINST CRYING. YOU DON'T HAVE TO PROVE TO ME HOW BRAVE AND TOUGH YOU ARE.

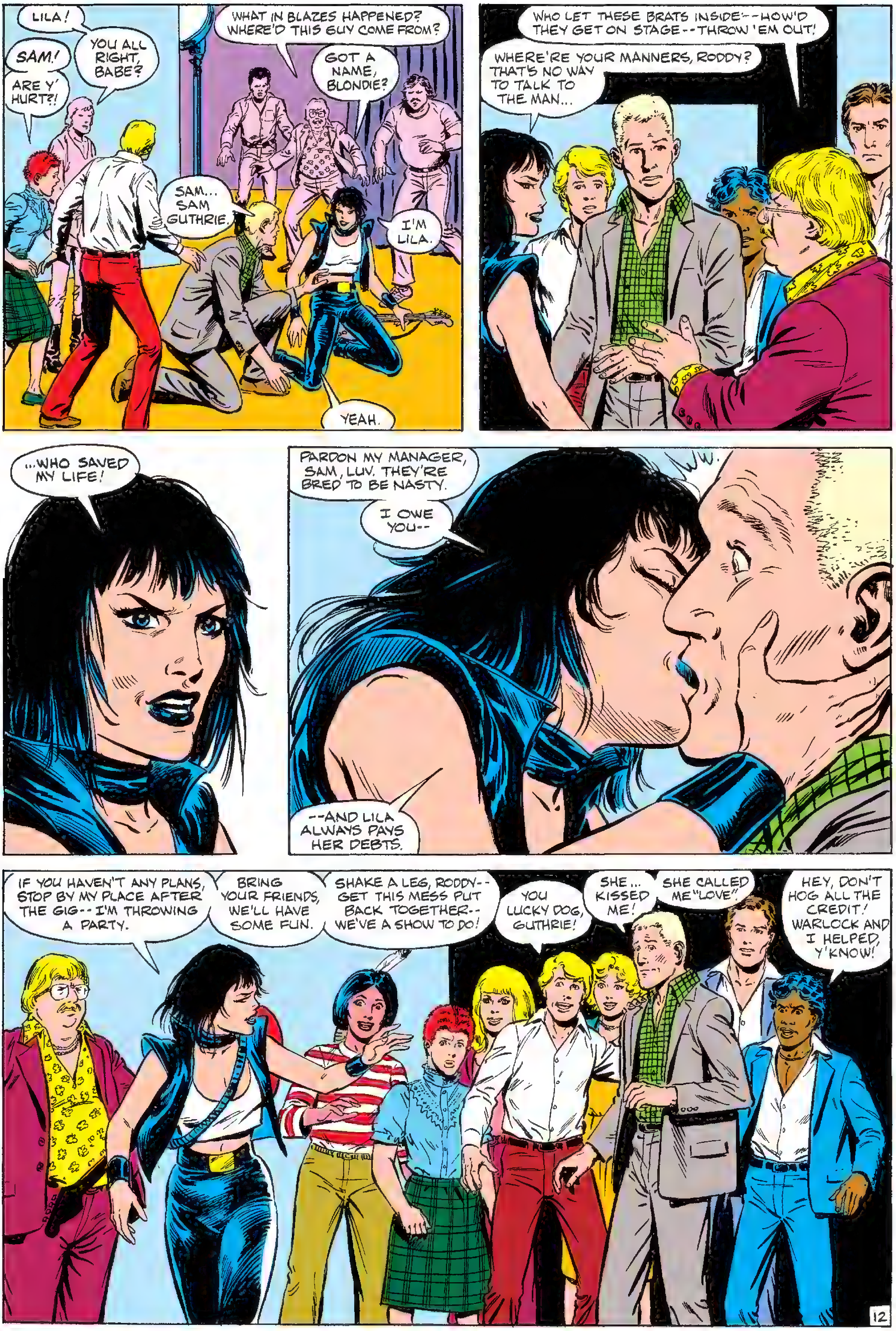

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG TO GET BETTER? I *HATE* THIS!
YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE *ALIVE,* GIRL!
I KNOW, STEVIE, BUT SOMETIMES IT'S SO *HARD!*
IT WAS FOR ME, TOO, WHEN I WAS RECOVERING FROM MY BROKEN KNEE.
HOW'D YOU STAND IT?
I SCREAMED A LOT, I CURSED, I BROKE THINGS, I CRIED-- MOSTLY, I ADMIT, WHEN I WAS ALONE-- I BECAME A REAL BEAST.
I TESTED MY FRIENDSHIPS TO THE LIMIT, AND DISCOVERED WHO I COULD TRULY COUNT ON.
BUT WITH THEIR HELP, I FOUGHT. I GOT WELL. YOU MUSTN'T BOTTLE UP YOUR EMOTIONS, DANI--YOU HAVE TO GIVE THEM RELEASE, SOMEHOW, OR YOU'LL TEAR YOURSELF APART INSIDE.
TAKE THINGS ONE DAY, ONE STEP-- ONE MIRACLE-- AT A TIME.
WHAT'S THAT YELLING-- WHO'S THERE?!
*ROBERTO!?!*
DANI, I GOT 'EM!
TICKETS FOR ALL OF US, TO *LILA CHENEY'S* FINAL CONCERT, SATURDAY NIGHT-- *I GOT 'EM!!*

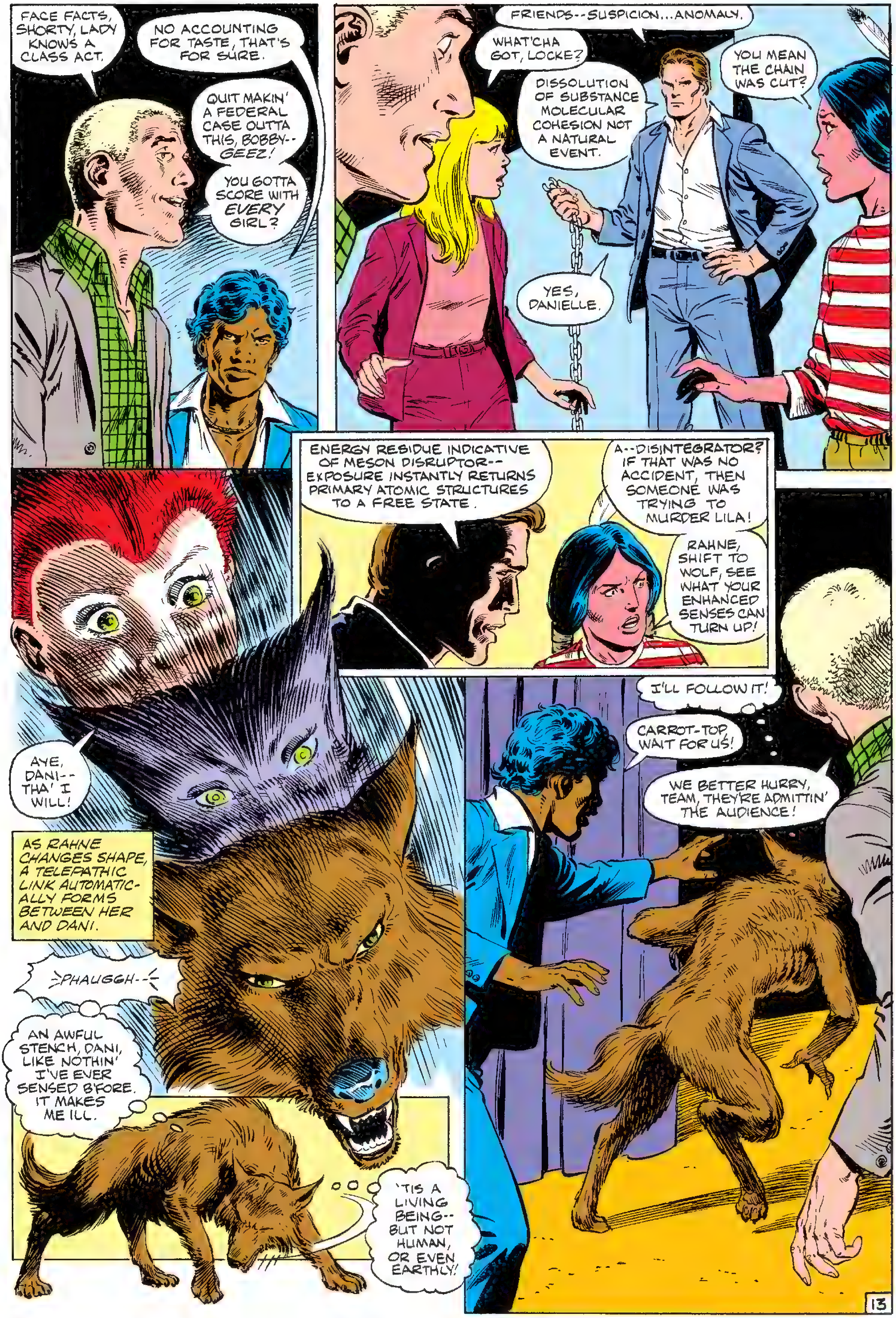

AND SO...
...ON THE APPOINTED DAY, AT THE APPOINTED TIME, THE FAITHFUL CONVERGE ON THE STARLITE BALLROOM, IN LOWER MANHATTAN...
...TO HEAR THE LAST INSTALLMENT OF LILA'S TRIUMPHANT WORLD TOUR, WHICH HAS PACKED HOUSES FROM LONDON TO TŌKYŌ AND BACK AGAIN!
LILA CHENEY
ALL THESE PEOPLE-- DRESSED FOR A HALLOWE'EN PARTY!
WE COULD WEAR OUR COSTUMES AN' STILL NOT STAND OUT FROM THIS CROWD.
WE'RE HERE TO ENJOY OURSELVES, SAM. LIKE THE PROF SAID, THE NEW MUTANTS DON'T LOOK FOR TROUBLE.
THE LINE GOES AROUND THE BLOCK!
WE'LL BE WAITING FOR *HOURS* BEFORE WE GET IN.
NO, WE WON'T, ILLYANA, MY DARLING...
FOLLOW ME, PEOPLE.
PASS, KIDS.
OUR TICKETS ADMIT US TO THE *SOUND CHECK* AS WELL AS THE CONCERT.
FINKS!
SLY DOGS!
LET US IN, TOO!
ARE THEY FAMOUS? CAN WE HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPHS?
NO FAIR! NO FAIR!
THERE ARE ADVANTAGES TO HAVING A BILLIONAIRE FOR A FATHER, EVEN IF WE'RE NOT ON SPEAKING TERMS. THE TOUR PROMOTER OWED ME A FAVOR.
THIS IS VERY EXCITING, ROBERTO.
WE HAVE NO ENTERTAINMENTS LIKE IT AT HOME IN *NOVA ROMA*-- EXCEPT PERHAPS THE CHARIOT RACES AND GLADIATORIAL COMBATS IN THE COLISEUM.
OH, AMARA-- ICK!

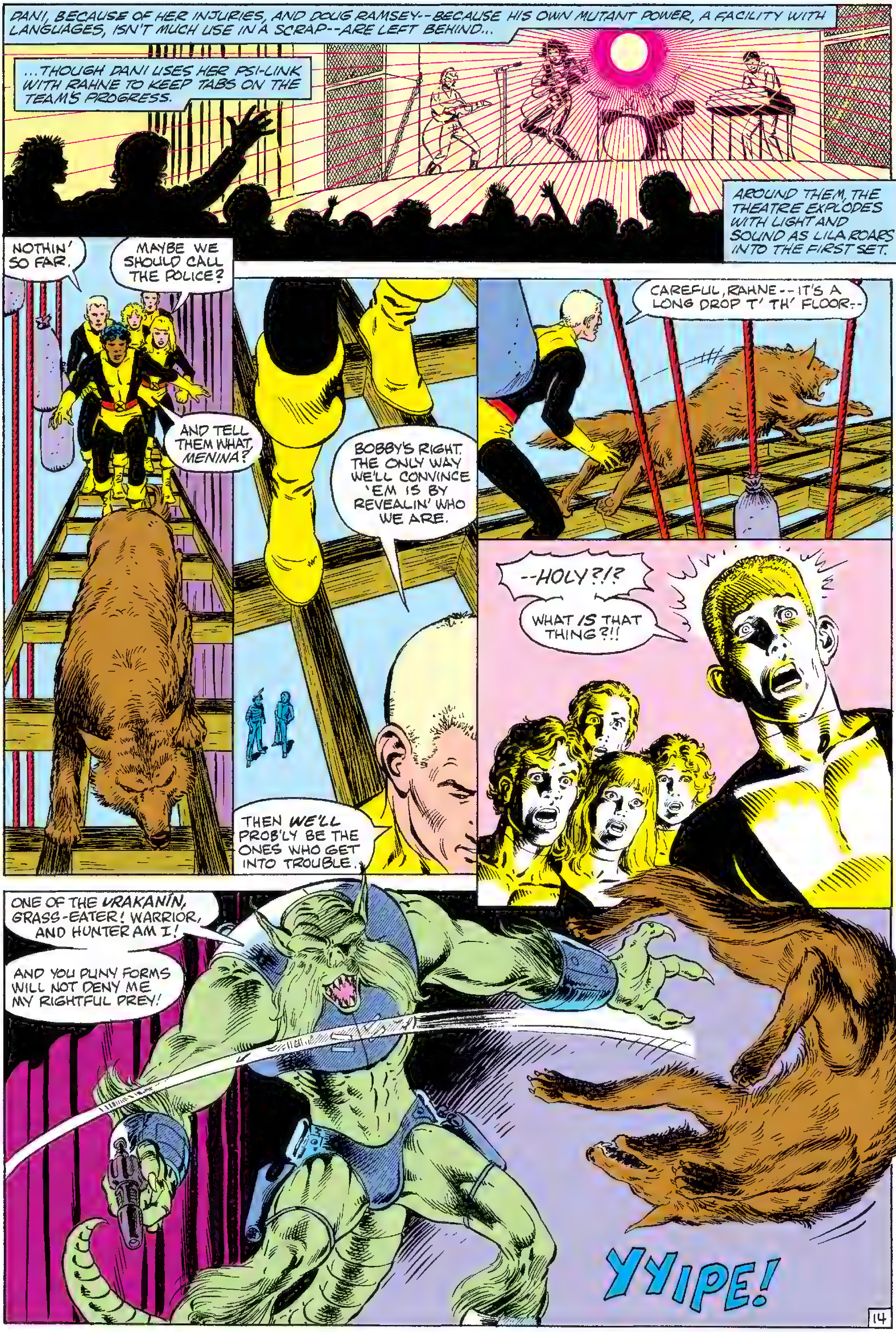

WHERE'RE WE S'POSED TO SIT, BOBBY?
WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT, SAM-- LOOK, THERE'S THE BAND!
I REALLY LIKE BEN LOCKLIN, THE BASS PLAYER.
DANI, HE'S *GORGEOUS!*
LEAD GUITARIST'S CONAL DURÁN, AN' TH' DRUMMER'S PHIL HOVANNES.
TESTING... TESTING... *"THE STARS... SHINE UP... ♪ THROUGH HADES!"* ♫
TOO MUCH VIBRATO IN THE MID-RANGE, REG. CAN YOU CLEAR IT UP, MATE?
GANGWAY, KIDS, COMIN' THROUGH!
MAKE YOURSELVES SCARCE, WILLYA-- WE'RE TRYIN' T' DO SOME WORK!
WE'RE IN THE WAY, 'BERTO. WE SHOULD GO.
NO WAY, RAHNEY, UNLESS WE'RE FORCED TO.
WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER GET A CHANCE TO SEE STUFF LIKE THIS AGAIN!
IT'S A MADHOUSE-- AND THE SHOW STARTS IN AN HOUR--HOW'LL THEY EVER GET READY?!
PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT, I GUESS-- *THERE SHE IS!*
*LILA CHENEY!*
LEMME SEE--
--OH, BE STILL MY HEART, I THINK I'M IN *LOVE!*
C'MON, BOBBY. YOU SAY THAT ABOUT *ALL* THE GIRLS!

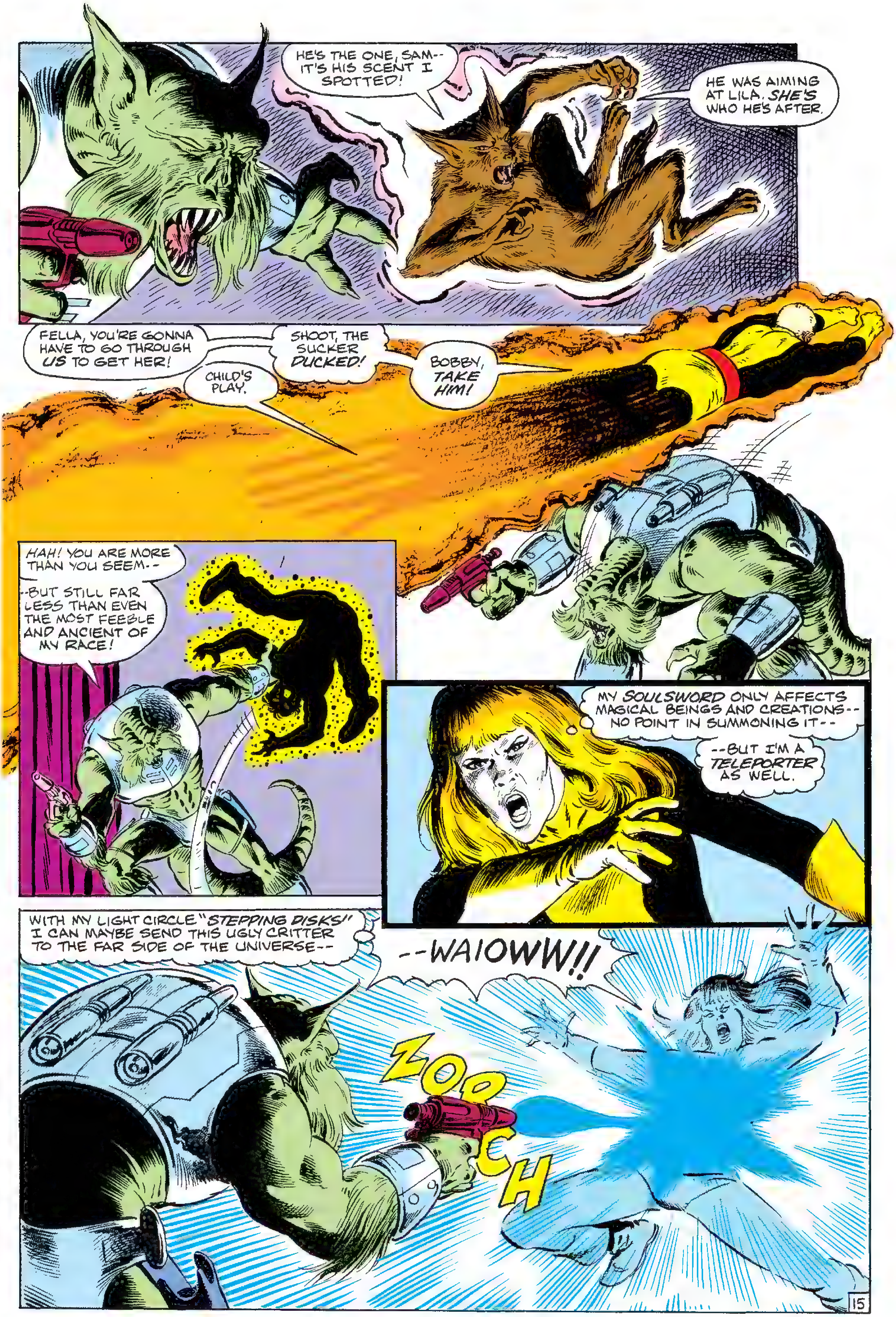

LOOK ALIVE, YOU LOT-- NO MORE MUCKIN' ABOUT--
--IT'S TIME TO ROCK'N'ROLL!
SHE'S GREAT!
SINGS GOOD, TOO!
UHHH... UH-HUH--RIGHT, ILLYANA. AH, TH' HECK WITH IT, AH'M IN LOVE, TOO. WITH THE MUSIC AN' THE LADY.
WE GONNA MEET HER, BOBBY?
I CERTAINLY MEAN TO.
SNAP
BUT THEN...
...WITHOUT WARNING...
ALARM!!
WHA'S WRONG, WARLOCK?
RESTRAINTS ON SOUND PROJECTION STRUCTURE-- FAILURE!
THAT SPEAKER TOWER'S COLLAPSING!
THE MUSIC'S TOO LOUD--
NO ONE ON-STAGE HAS NOTICED!
QUERY: IMMEDIATE COURSE OF ACTION?

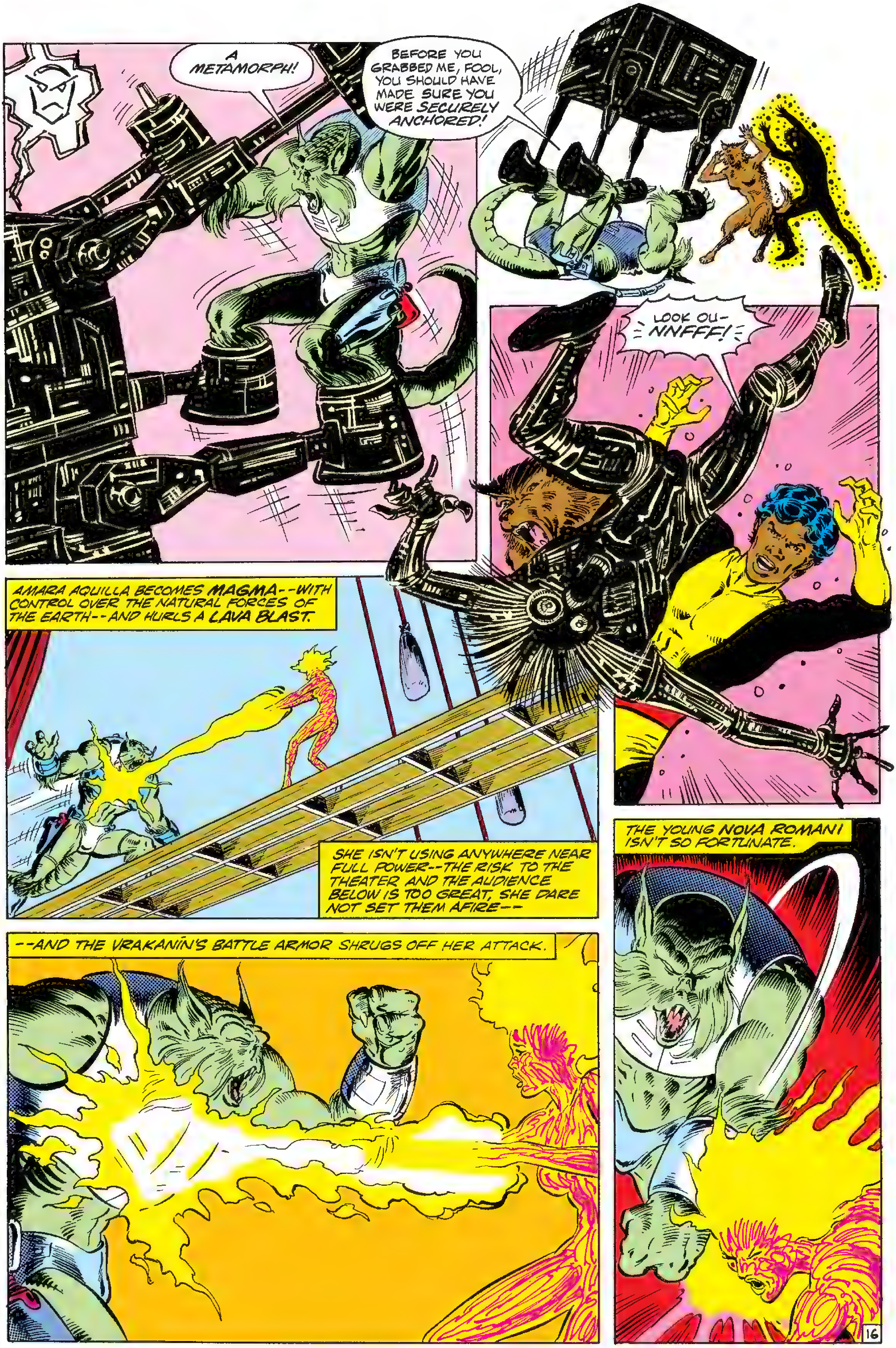

I'LL GRAB THE CHAINS--YOU TRY TO KEEP THE REST OF THE TOWER FROM FALLING!
ROBERTO DA COSTA SHIFTS TO HIS SUPER-STRONG INCARNATION AS SUNSPOT, WHILE HIS COMPANION SHUCKS OFF HIS HUMAN GUISE, REVERTING TO HIS NATURAL APPEARANCE.
WARLOCK IS A METAMORPH...
...ABLE TO RECAST HIS BODY INTO VIRTUALLY ANY FORM IMAGINABLE...
THE TOPMOST SPEAKER--THE GUYS DIDN'T CATCH IT!
IT'S DROPPIN' STRAIGHT FOR LILA!
IF AH CUT POWER AS AH EMERGE FROM THE SIDE-STAGE SHADOWS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT, NO ONE SHOULD REALIZE AH WAS BLASTIN'!
HEY!?!
SORRY 'BOUT THIS, MA'AM!
KRAWHAM!

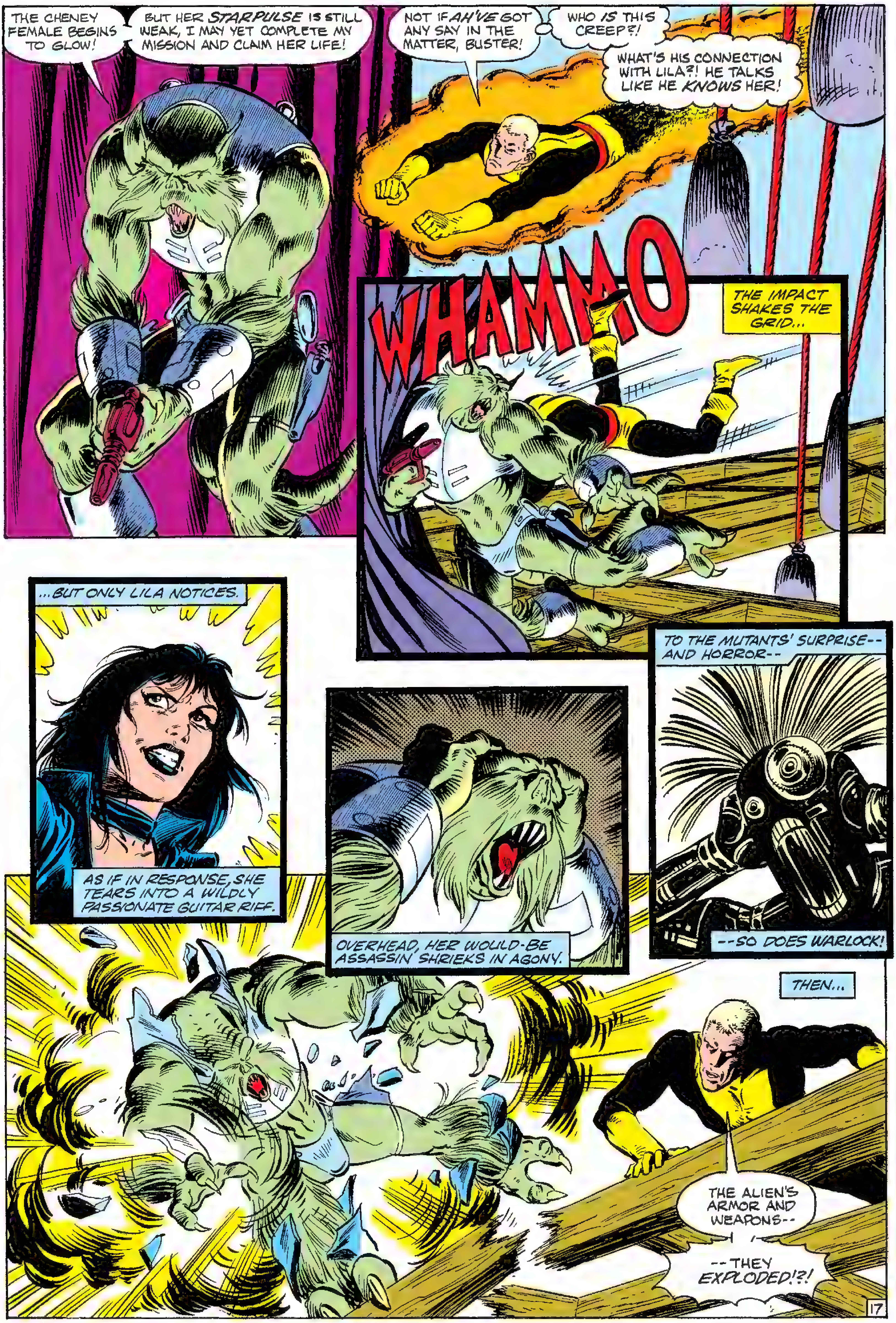

LILA!
SAM!
ARE Y' HURT?!
YOU ALL RIGHT, BABE?
WHAT IN BLAZES HAPPENED? WHERE'D THIS GUY COME FROM?
GOT A NAME, BLONDIE?
SAM... SAM GUTHRIE.
I'M LILA.
YEAH.
WHO LET THESE BRATS INSIDE--HOW'D THEY GET ON STAGE--THROW 'EM OUT!
WHERE'RE YOUR MANNERS, RODDY? THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO THE MAN...
...WHO SAVED MY LIFE!
PARDON MY MANAGER, SAM, LUV. THEY'RE BRED TO BE NASTY.
I OWE YOU--
--AND LILA ALWAYS PAYS HER DEBTS.
IF YOU HAVEN'T ANY PLANS, STOP BY MY PLACE AFTER THE GIG--I'M THROWING A PARTY.
BRING YOUR FRIENDS, WE'LL HAVE SOME FUN.
SHAKE A LEG, RODDY--GET THIS MESS PUT BACK TOGETHER--WE'VE A SHOW TO DO!
YOU LUCKY DOG, GUTHRIE!
SHE... KISSED ME!
SHE CALLED ME "LOVE".
HEY, DON'T HOG ALL THE CREDIT! WARLOCK AND I HELPED, Y'KNOW!

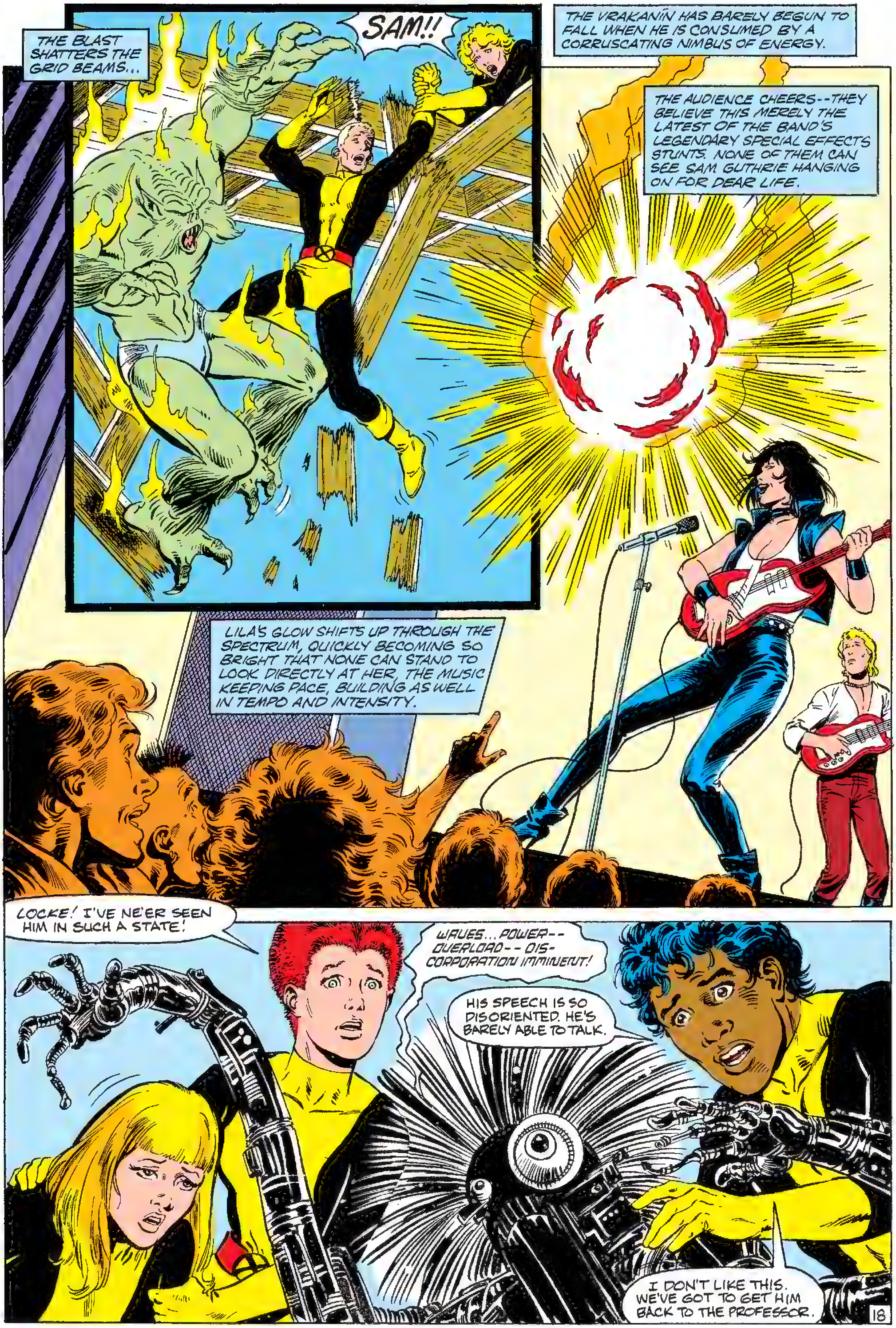

FACE FACTS, SHORTY, LADY KNOWS A CLASS ACT.
NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
QUIT MAKIN' A FEDERAL CASE OUTTA THIS, BOBBY--GEEZ!
YOU GOTTA SCORE WITH *EVERY* GIRL?
FRIENDS--SUSPICION...ANOMALY.
WHAT'CHA GOT, LOCKE?
DISSOLUTION OF SUBSTANCE MOLECULAR COHESION NOT A NATURAL EVENT.
YOU MEAN THE CHAIN WAS CUT?
YES, DANIELLE.
ENERGY RESIDUE INDICATIVE OF MESON DISRUPTOR--EXPOSURE INSTANTLY RETURNS PRIMARY ATOMIC STRUCTURES TO A FREE STATE.
A--DISINTEGRATOR? IF THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT, THEN SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO MURDER LILA!
RAHNE, SHIFT TO WOLF, SEE WHAT YOUR ENHANCED SENSES CAN TURN UP!
AYE, DANI--THA' I WILL!
*AS RAHNE CHANGES SHAPE, A TELEPATHIC LINK AUTOMATICALLY FORMS BETWEEN HER AND DANI.*
*PHAUGGH--*
AN AWFUL STENCH, DANI, LIKE NOTHIN' I'VE EVER SENSED B'FORE. IT MAKES ME ILL.
'TIS A LIVING BEING--BUT NOT HUMAN, OR EVEN EARTHLY!
I'LL FOLLOW IT!
CARROT-TOP, WAIT FOR US!
WE BETTER HURRY, TEAM, THEY'RE ADMITTIN' THE AUDIENCE!

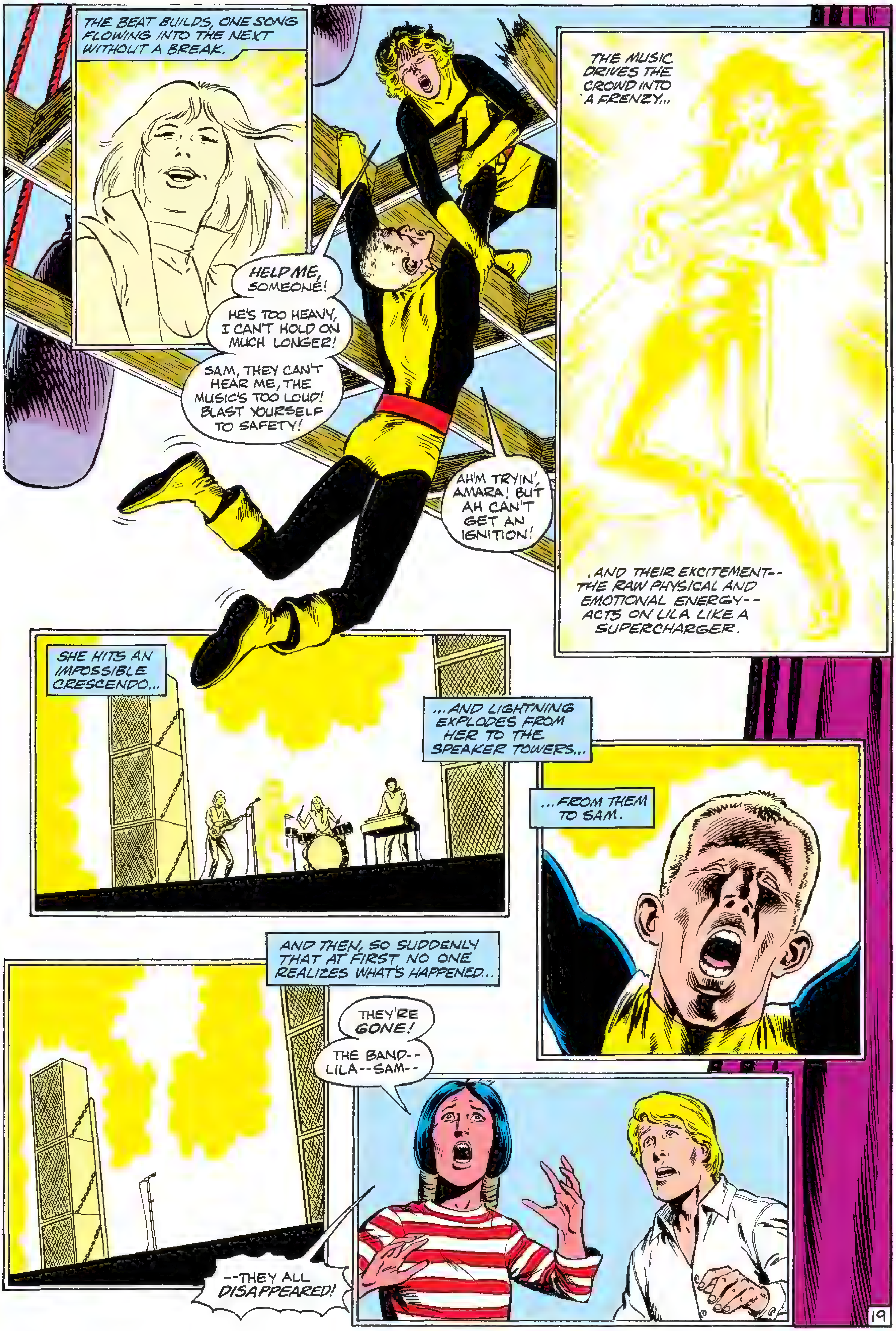

DANI, BECAUSE OF HER INJURIES, AND DOUG RAMSEY--BECAUSE HIS OWN MUTANT POWER, A FACILITY WITH LANGUAGES, ISN'T MUCH USE IN A SCRAP--ARE LEFT BEHIND...
...THOUGH DANI USES HER PSI-LINK WITH RAHNE TO KEEP TABS ON THE TEAM'S PROGRESS.
AROUND THEM, THE THEATRE EXPLODES WITH LIGHT AND SOUND AS LILA ROARS INTO THE FIRST SET.
NOTHIN' SO FAR.
MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE?
AND TELL THEM WHAT, MENINA?
BOBBY'S RIGHT. THE ONLY WAY WE'LL CONVINCE 'EM IS BY REVEALIN' WHO WE ARE.
THEN WE'LL PROB'LY BE THE ONES WHO GET INTO TROUBLE.
CAREFUL, RAHNE--IT'S A LONG DROP T' TH' FLOOR--
--HOLY?!?
WHAT IS THAT THING?!!
ONE OF THE URAKANIN, GRASS-EATER! WARRIOR, AND HUNTER AM I!
AND YOU PUNY FORMS WILL NOT DENY ME MY RIGHTFUL PREY!
YYIPE!

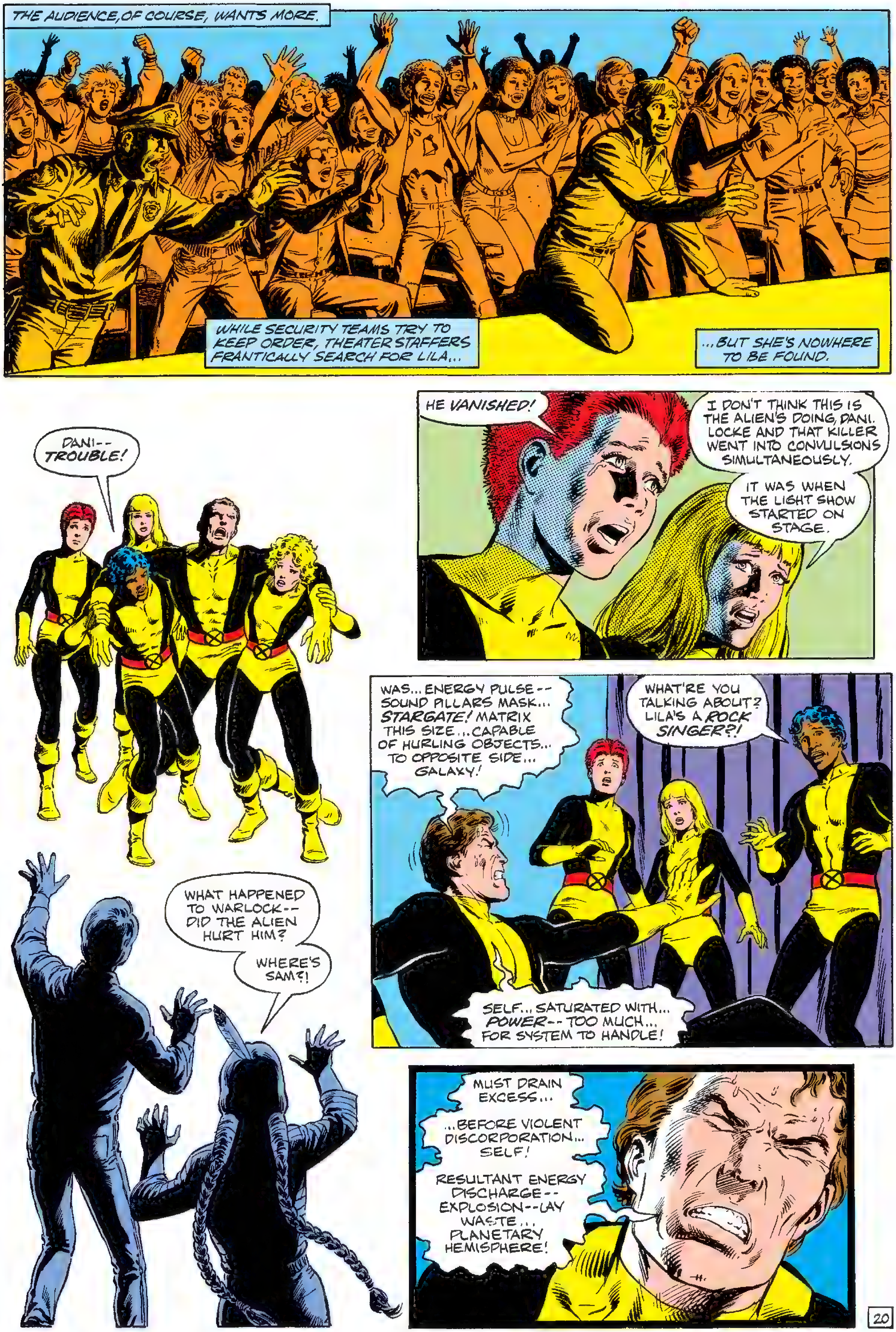

HE'S THE ONE, SAM-- IT'S HIS SCENT I SPOTTED!
HE WAS AIMING AT LILA. *SHE'S* WHO HE'S AFTER.
FELLA, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO GO THROUGH *US* TO GET HER!
SHOOT, THE SUCKER *DUCKED!*
CHILD'S PLAY.
BOBBY, *TAKE HIM!*
*HAH!* YOU ARE MORE THAN YOU SEEM--
--BUT STILL FAR LESS THAN EVEN THE MOST FEEBLE AND ANCIENT OF MY RACE!
MY *SOULSWORD* ONLY AFFECTS MAGICAL BEINGS AND CREATIONS-- NO POINT IN SUMMONING IT--
--BUT I'M A *TELEPORTER* AS WELL.
WITH MY LIGHT CIRCLE "*STEPPING DISKS!*" I CAN MAYBE SEND THIS UGLY CRITTER TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE--
--WAIOWW!!
ZOOCH

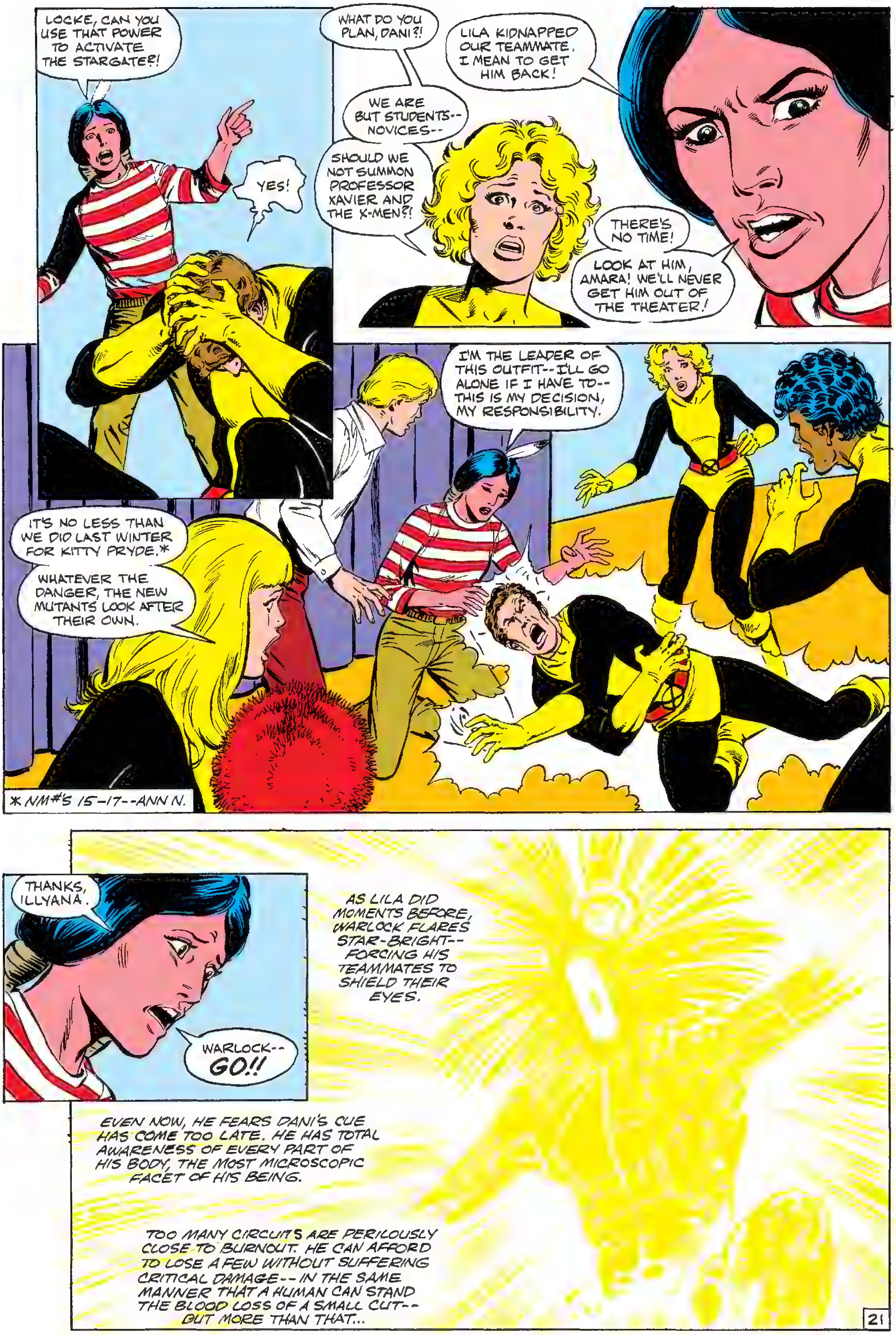

A METAMORPH!
BEFORE YOU GRABBED ME, FOOL, YOU SHOULD HAVE MADE SURE YOU WERE SECURELY ANCHORED!
LOOK OU-NNFFF!
AMARA AQUILLA BECOMES MAGMA--WITH CONTROL OVER THE NATURAL FORCES OF THE EARTH--AND HURLS A LAVA BLAST.
SHE ISN'T USING ANYWHERE NEAR FULL POWER--THE RISK TO THE THEATER AND THE AUDIENCE BELOW IS TOO GREAT, SHE DARE NOT SET THEM AFIRE--
--AND THE VRAKANIN'S BATTLE ARMOR SHRUGS OFF HER ATTACK.
THE YOUNG NOVA ROMANI ISN'T SO FORTUNATE.

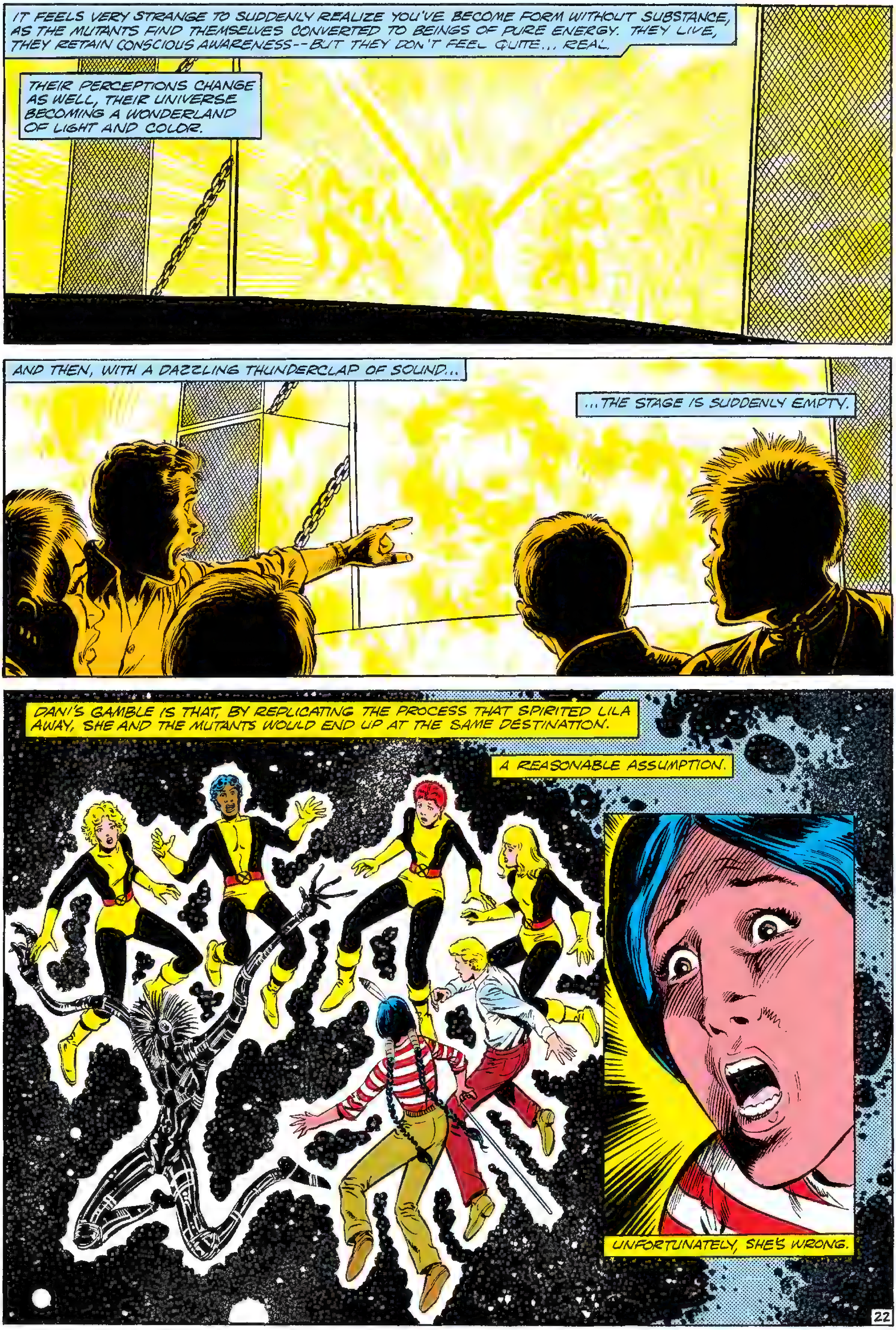

THE CHENEY FEMALE BEGINS TO GLOW!
BUT HER *STARPULSE* IS STILL WEAK, I MAY YET COMPLETE MY MISSION AND CLAIM HER LIFE!
NOT IF *AH'VE* GOT ANY SAY IN THE MATTER, BUSTER!
WHO *IS* THIS CREEP?!
WHAT'S HIS CONNECTION WITH LILA?! HE TALKS LIKE HE *KNOWS* HER!
WHAMMO
*THE IMPACT SHAKES THE GRID...*
*...BUT ONLY LILA NOTICES.*
*AS IF IN RESPONSE, SHE TEARS INTO A WILDLY PASSIONATE GUITAR RIFF.*
*OVERHEAD, HER WOULD-BE ASSASSIN SHRIEKS IN AGONY.*
*TO THE MUTANTS' SURPRISE-- AND HORROR--*
*--SO DOES WARLOCK!*
*THEN...*
THE ALIEN'S ARMOR AND WEAPONS--
--THEY *EXPLODED!?!*

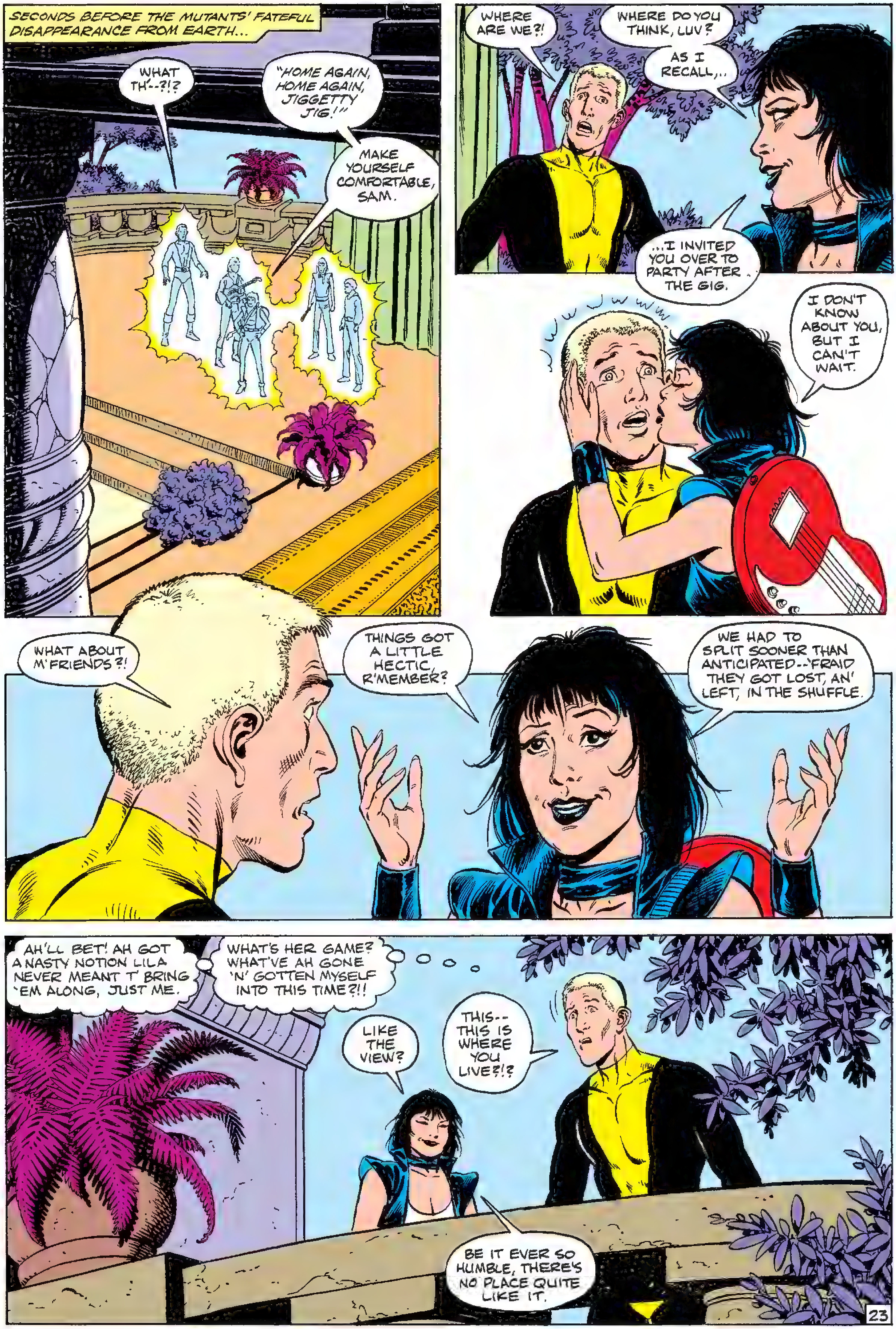

THE BLAST SHATTERS THE GRID BEAMS...
SAM!!
THE VRAKANÍN HAS BARELY BEGUN TO FALL WHEN HE IS CONSUMED BY A CORRUSCATING NIMBUS OF ENERGY.
THE AUDIENCE CHEERS--THEY BELIEVE THIS MERELY THE LATEST OF THE BAND'S LEGENDARY SPECIAL EFFECTS STUNTS. NONE OF THEM CAN SEE SAM GUTHRIE HANGING ON FOR DEAR LIFE.
LILA'S GLOW SHIFTS UP THROUGH THE SPECTRUM, QUICKLY BECOMING SO BRIGHT THAT NONE CAN STAND TO LOOK DIRECTLY AT HER, THE MUSIC KEEPING PACE, BUILDING AS WELL IN TEMPO AND INTENSITY.
LOCKE! I'VE NE'ER SEEN HIM IN SUCH A STATE!
WAVES... POWER-- OVERLOAD-- DISCORPORATION IMMINENT!
HIS SPEECH IS SO DISORIENTED. HE'S BARELY ABLE TO TALK.
I DON'T LIKE THIS. WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM BACK TO THE PROFESSOR.

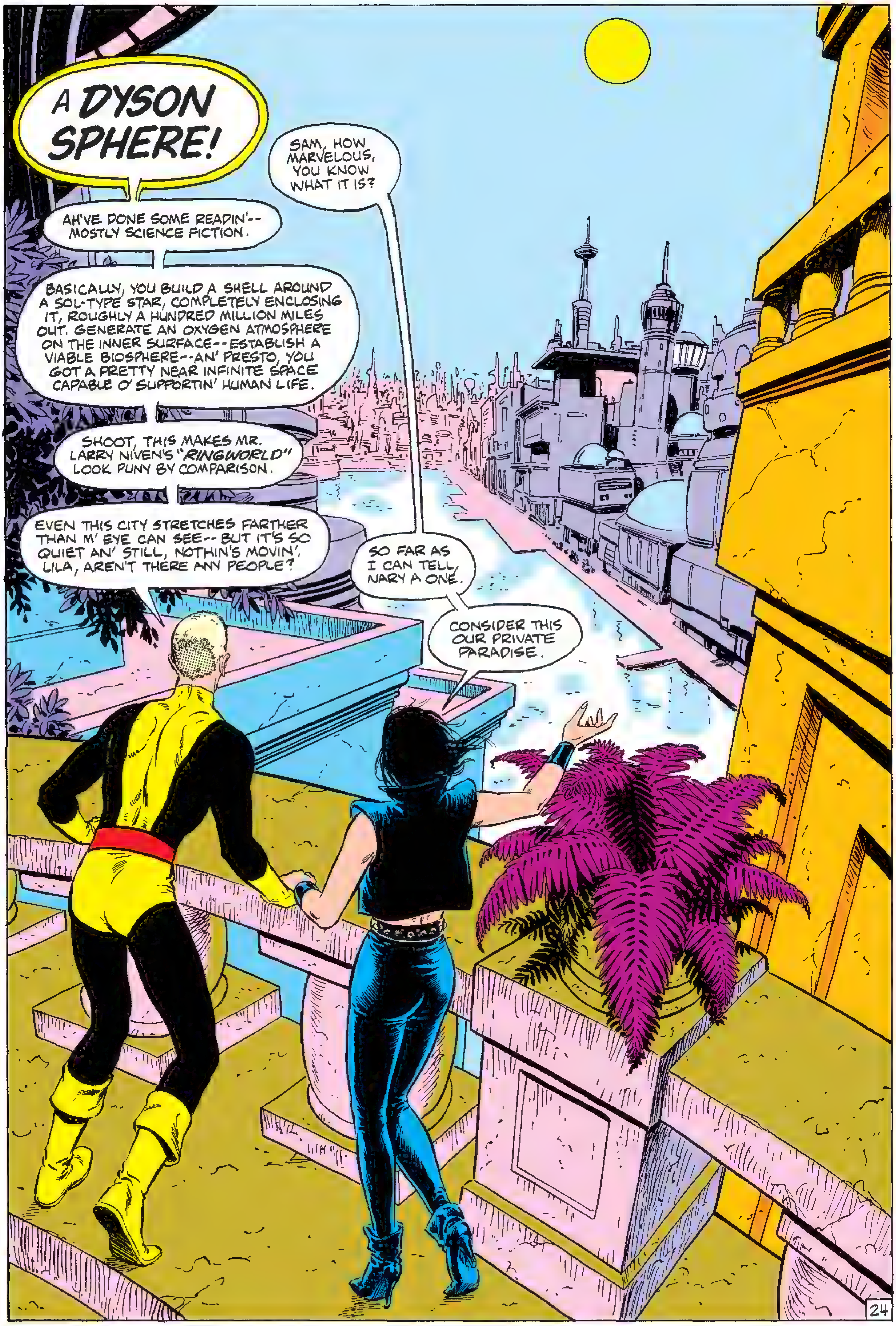

THE BEAT BUILDS, ONE SONG FLOWING INTO THE NEXT WITHOUT A BREAK.
HELP ME, SOMEONE!
HE'S TOO HEAVY, I CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER!
SAM, THEY CAN'T HEAR ME, THE MUSIC'S TOO LOUD! BLAST YOURSELF TO SAFETY!
AH'M TRYIN', AMARA! BUT AH CAN'T GET AN IGNITION!
THE MUSIC DRIVES THE CROWD INTO A FRENZY...
...AND THEIR EXCITEMENT--THE RAW PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENERGY--ACTS ON LILA LIKE A SUPERCHARGER.
SHE HITS AN IMPOSSIBLE CRESCENDO...
...AND LIGHTNING EXPLODES FROM HER TO THE SPEAKER TOWERS...
...FROM THEM TO SAM.
AND THEN, SO SUDDENLY THAT AT FIRST NO ONE REALIZES WHAT'S HAPPENED...
THEY'RE GONE!
THE BAND--LILA--SAM--
--THEY ALL DISAPPEARED!

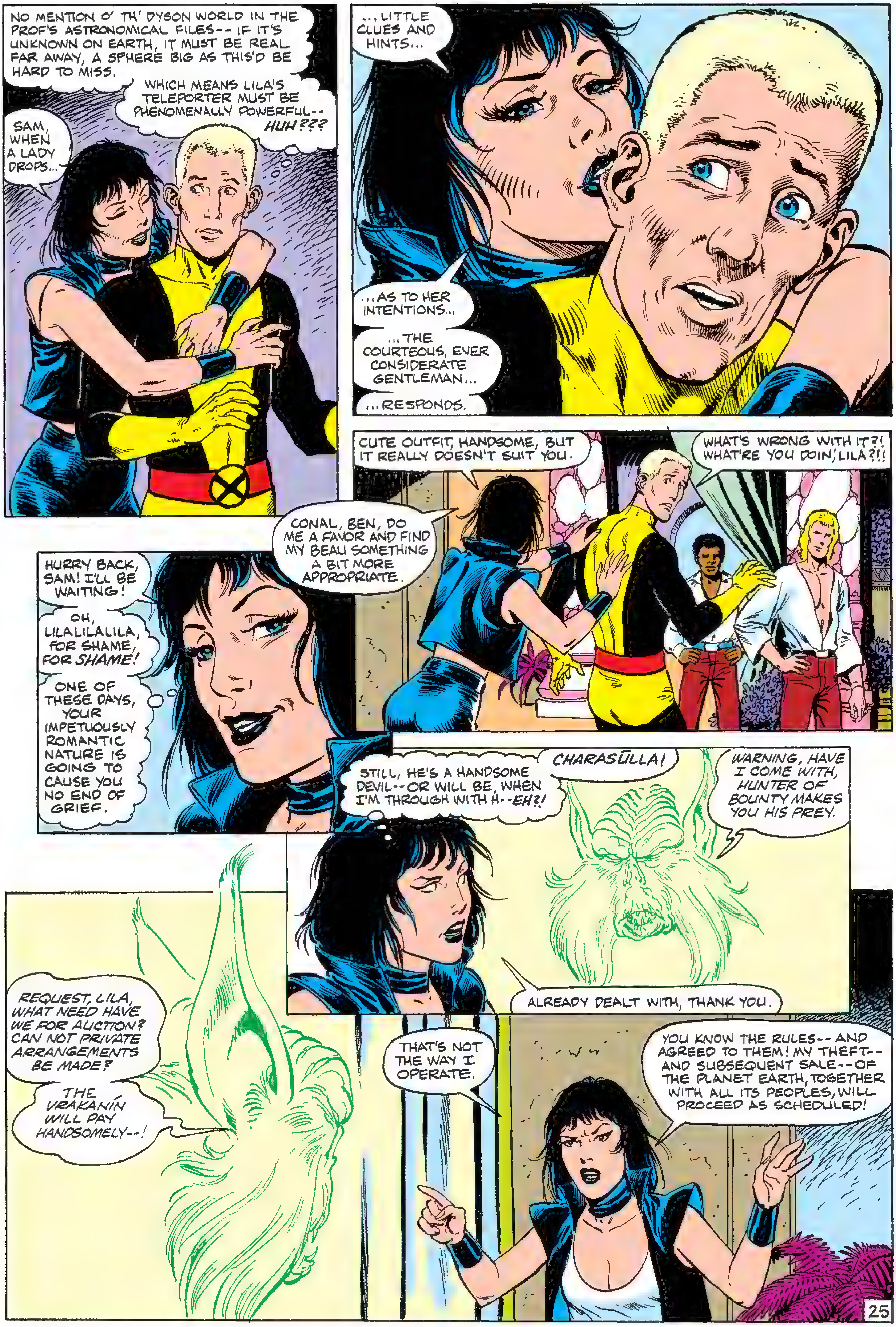

THE AUDIENCE, OF COURSE, WANTS MORE.
WHILE SECURITY TEAMS TRY TO KEEP ORDER, THEATER STAFFERS FRANTICALLY SEARCH FOR LILA...
...BUT SHE'S NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.
DANI-- TROUBLE!
HE VANISHED!
I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE ALIEN'S DOING, DANI. LOCKE AND THAT KILLER WENT INTO CONVULSIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY.
IT WAS WHEN THE LIGHT SHOW STARTED ON STAGE.
WAS... ENERGY PULSE-- SOUND PILLARS MASK... STARGATE! MATRIX THIS SIZE... CAPABLE OF HURLING OBJECTS... TO OPPOSITE SIDE... GALAXY!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? LILA'S A ROCK SINGER?!
SELF... SATURATED WITH... POWER-- TOO MUCH... FOR SYSTEM TO HANDLE!
WHAT HAPPENED TO WARLOCK-- DID THE ALIEN HURT HIM?
WHERE'S SAM?!
MUST DRAIN EXCESS...
...BEFORE VIOLENT DISCORPORATION... SELF!
RESULTANT ENERGY DISCHARGE-- EXPLOSION--LAY WASTE... PLANETARY HEMISPHERE!

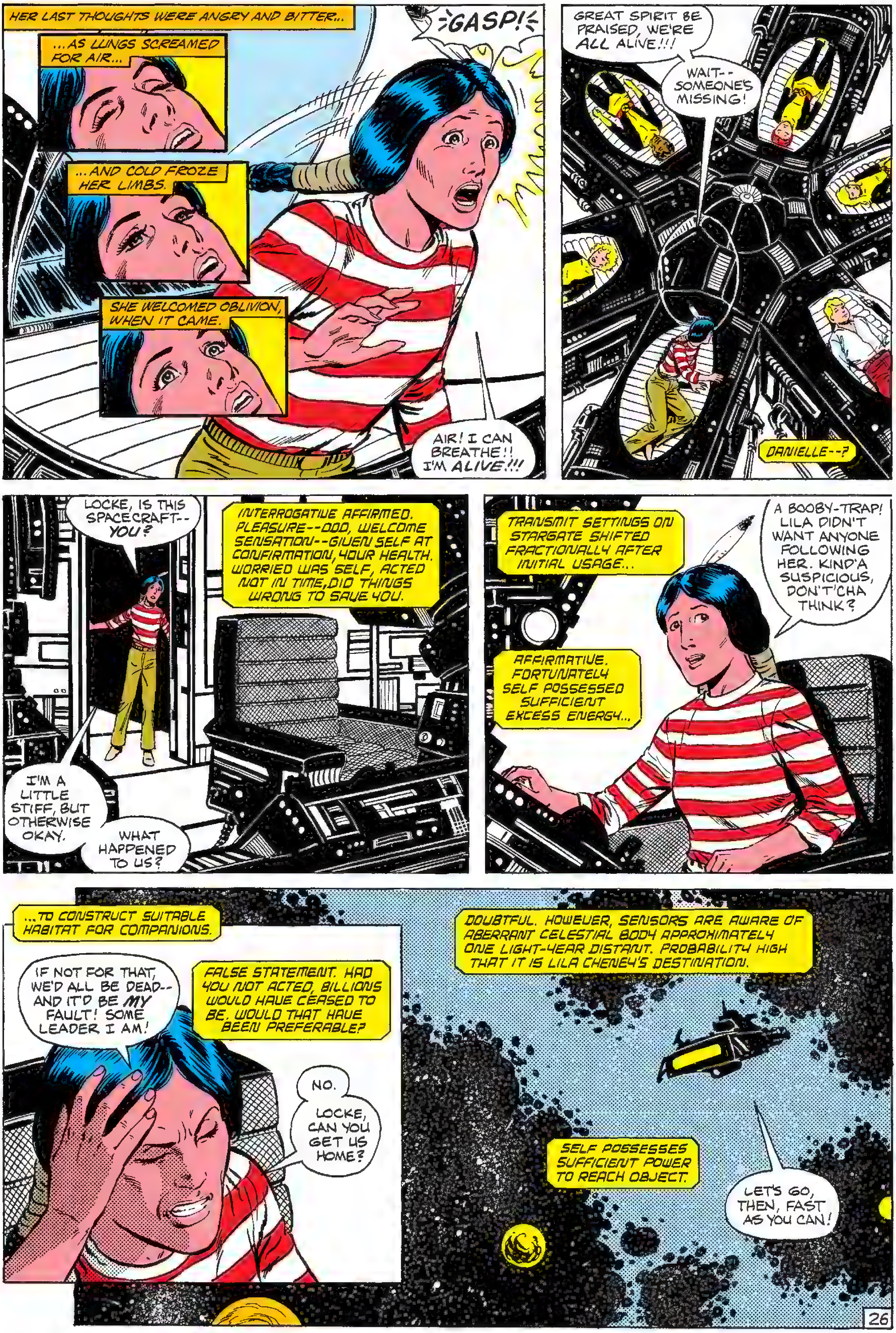

LOCKE, CAN YOU USE THAT POWER TO ACTIVATE THE STARGATE?!
YES!
WHAT DO YOU PLAN, DANI?!
WE ARE BUT STUDENTS--NOVICES--
SHOULD WE NOT SUMMON PROFESSOR XAVIER AND THE X-MEN?!
LILA KIDNAPPED OUR TEAMMATE. I MEAN TO GET HIM BACK!
THERE'S NO TIME!
LOOK AT HIM, AMARA! WE'LL NEVER GET HIM OUT OF THE THEATER!
I'M THE LEADER OF THIS OUTFIT--I'LL GO ALONE IF I HAVE TO--THIS IS MY DECISION, MY RESPONSIBILITY.
IT'S NO LESS THAN WE DID LAST WINTER FOR KITTY PRYDE.*
WHATEVER THE DANGER, THE NEW MUTANTS LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN.
* NM#'S 15-17--ANN N.
THANKS, ILLYANA.
WARLOCK-- GO!!
AS LILA DID MOMENTS BEFORE, WARLOCK FLARES STAR-BRIGHT-- FORCING HIS TEAMMATES TO SHIELD THEIR EYES.
EVEN NOW, HE FEARS DANI'S CUE HAS COME TOO LATE. HE HAS TOTAL AWARENESS OF EVERY PART OF HIS BODY, THE MOST MICROSCOPIC FACET OF HIS BEING.
TOO MANY CIRCUITS ARE PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO BURNOUT. HE CAN AFFORD TO LOSE A FEW WITHOUT SUFFERING CRITICAL DAMAGE-- IN THE SAME MANNER THAT A HUMAN CAN STAND THE BLOOD LOSS OF A SMALL CUT-- BUT MORE THAN THAT...

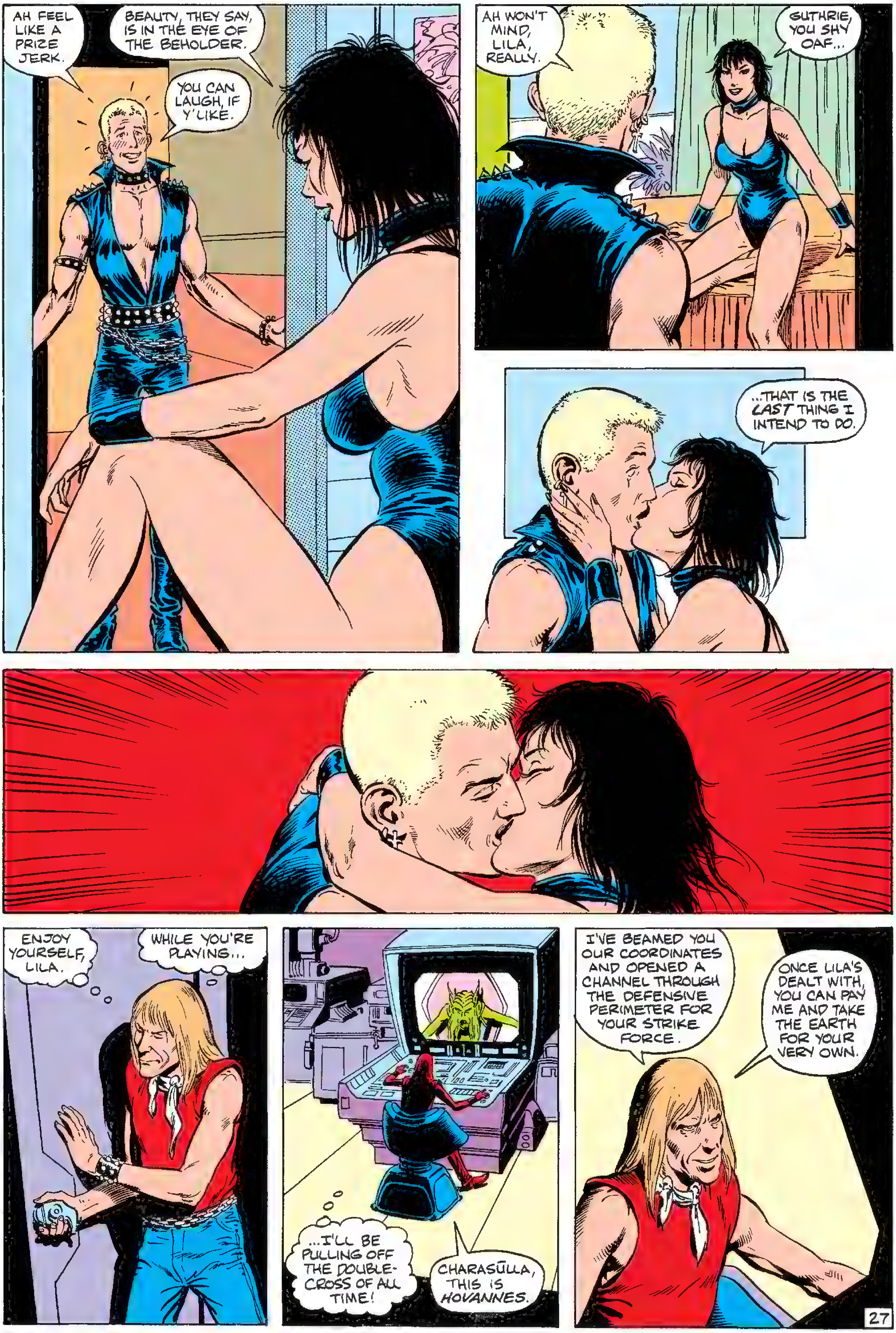

IT FEELS VERY STRANGE TO SUDDENLY REALIZE YOU'VE BECOME FORM WITHOUT SUBSTANCE, AS THE MUTANTS FIND THEMSELVES CONVERTED TO BEINGS OF PURE ENERGY. THEY LIVE, THEY RETAIN CONSCIOUS AWARENESS--BUT THEY DON'T FEEL QUITE... REAL.
THEIR PERCEPTIONS CHANGE AS WELL, THEIR UNIVERSE BECOMING A WONDERLAND OF LIGHT AND COLOR.
AND THEN, WITH A DAZZLING THUNDERCLAP OF SOUND...
...THE STAGE IS SUDDENLY EMPTY.
DANI'S GAMBLE IS THAT, BY REPLICATING THE PROCESS THAT SPIRITED LILA AWAY, SHE AND THE MUTANTS WOULD END UP AT THE SAME DESTINATION.
A REASONABLE ASSUMPTION.
UNFORTUNATELY, SHE'S WRONG.

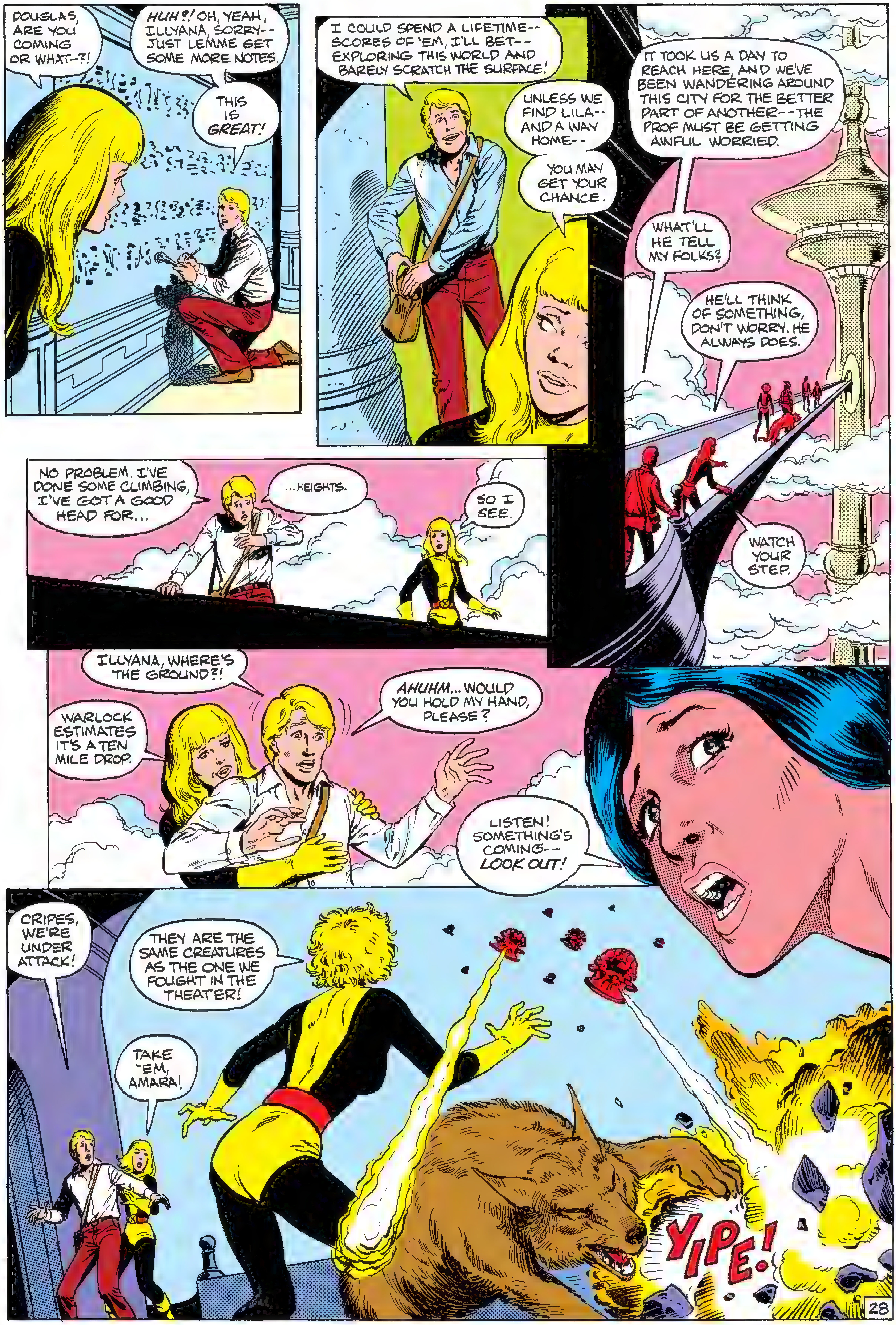

SECONDS BEFORE THE MUTANTS' FATEFUL DISAPPEARANCE FROM EARTH...
WHAT TH'--?!?
"HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN, JIGGETTY JIG!"
MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, SAM.
WHERE ARE WE?!
WHERE DO YOU THINK, LUV?
AS I RECALL,..
...I INVITED YOU OVER TO PARTY AFTER THE GIG.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I CAN'T WAIT.
WHAT ABOUT M'FRIENDS?!
THINGS GOT A LITTLE HECTIC, R'MEMBER?
WE HAD TO SPLIT SOONER THAN ANTICIPATED--'FRAID THEY GOT LOST, AN' LEFT, IN THE SHUFFLE.
AH'LL BET! AH GOT A NASTY NOTION LILA NEVER MEANT T' BRING 'EM ALONG, JUST ME.
WHAT'S HER GAME? WHAT'VE AH GONE 'N' GOTTEN MYSELF INTO THIS TIME?!!
LIKE THE VIEW?
THIS-- THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE?!?
BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE, THERE'S NO PLACE QUITE LIKE IT.

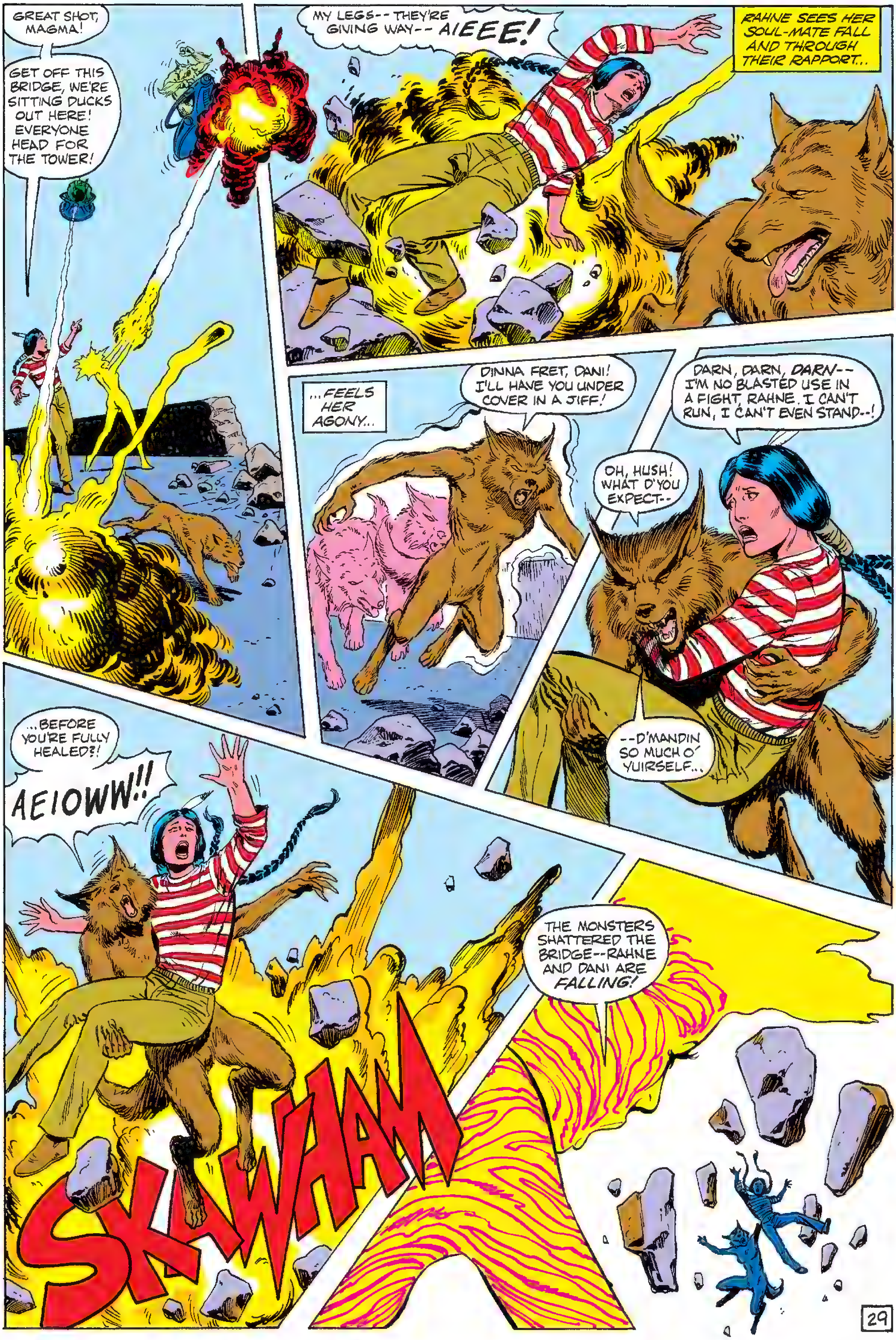

A DYSON SPHERE!
AH'VE DONE SOME READIN'-- MOSTLY SCIENCE FICTION.
BASICALLY, YOU BUILD A SHELL AROUND A SOL-TYPE STAR, COMPLETELY ENCLOSING IT, ROUGHLY A HUNDRED MILLION MILES OUT. GENERATE AN OXYGEN ATMOSPHERE ON THE INNER SURFACE--ESTABLISH A VIABLE BIOSPHERE--AN' PRESTO, YOU GOT A PRETTY NEAR INFINITE SPACE CAPABLE O' SUPPORTIN' HUMAN LIFE.
SHOOT, THIS MAKES MR. LARRY NIVEN'S "RINGWORLD" LOOK PUNY BY COMPARISON.
EVEN THIS CITY STRETCHES FARTHER THAN M' EYE CAN SEE-- BUT IT'S SO QUIET AN' STILL, NOTHIN'S MOVIN'. LILA, AREN'T THERE ANY PEOPLE?
SAM, HOW MARVELOUS, YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS?
SO FAR AS I CAN TELL, NARY A ONE.
CONSIDER THIS OUR PRIVATE PARADISE.

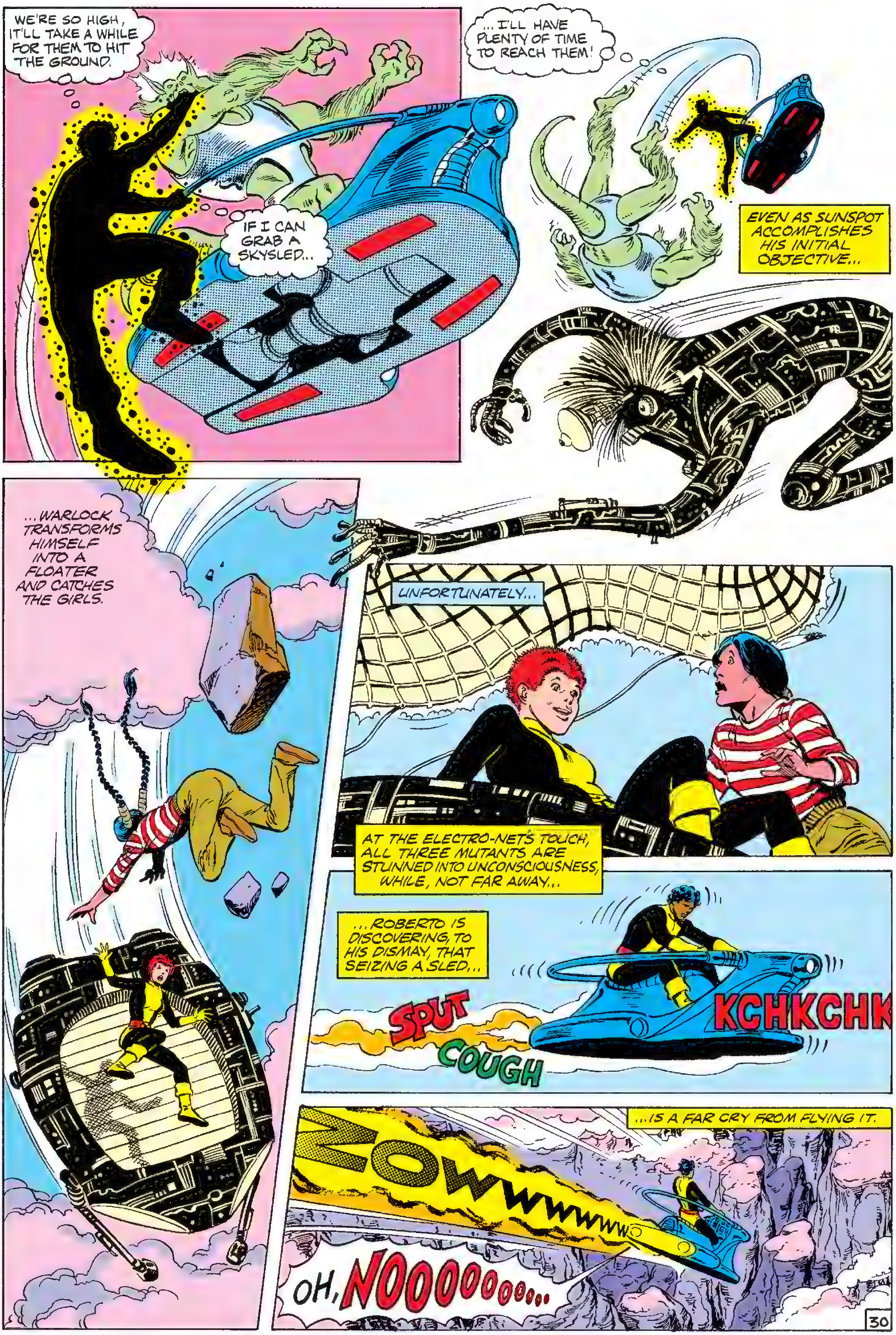

NO MENTION O' TH' DYSON WORLD IN THE PROF'S ASTRONOMICAL FILES-- IF IT'S UNKNOWN ON EARTH, IT MUST BE REAL FAR AWAY, A SPHERE BIG AS THIS'D BE HARD TO MISS.
WHICH MEANS LILA'S TELEPORTER MUST BE PHENOMENALLY POWERFUL-- *HUH???*
SAM, WHEN A LADY DROPS...
...LITTLE CLUES AND HINTS...
...AS TO HER INTENTIONS...
...THE COURTEOUS, EVER CONSIDERATE GENTLEMAN...
...RESPONDS.
CUTE OUTFIT, HANDSOME, BUT IT REALLY DOESN'T SUIT YOU.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', LILA?!!
CONAL, BEN, DO ME A FAVOR AND FIND MY BEAU SOMETHING A BIT MORE APPROPRIATE.
HURRY BACK, SAM! I'LL BE WAITING!
OH, LILALILALILA, FOR SHAME, FOR *SHAME!*
ONE OF THESE DAYS, YOUR IMPETUOUSLY ROMANTIC NATURE IS GOING TO CAUSE YOU NO END OF GRIEF.
STILL, HE'S A HANDSOME DEVIL--OR WILL BE, WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH H--*EH?!*
*CHARASŪLLA!*
*WARNING, HAVE I COME WITH, HUNTER OF BOUNTY MAKES YOU HIS PREY.*
ALREADY DEALT WITH, THANK YOU.
*REQUEST, LILA, WHAT NEED HAVE WE FOR AUCTION? CAN NOT PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE?*
*THE VRAKANÍN WILL PAY HANDSOMELY--!*
THAT'S NOT THE WAY I OPERATE.
YOU KNOW THE RULES-- AND AGREED TO THEM! MY THEFT-- AND SUBSEQUENT SALE--OF THE PLANET EARTH, TOGETHER WITH ALL ITS PEOPLES, WILL PROCEED AS SCHEDULED!

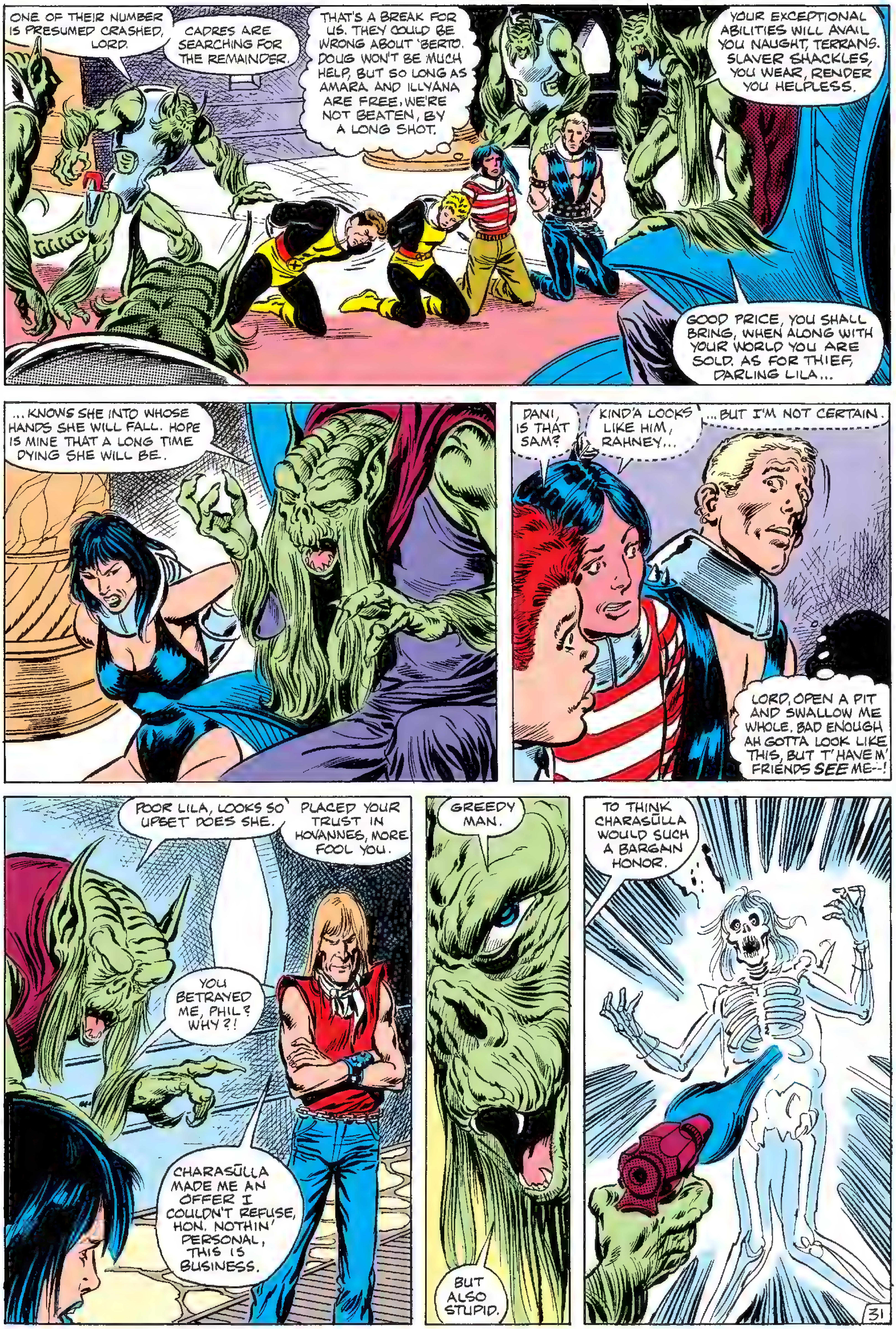

HER LAST THOUGHTS WERE ANGRY AND BITTER...
...AS LUNGS SCREAMED FOR AIR...
...AND COLD FROZE HER LIMBS.
SHE WELCOMED OBLIVION, WHEN IT CAME.
GASP!
AIR! I CAN BREATHE!! I'M ALIVE!!!
GREAT SPIRIT BE PRAISED, WE'RE ALL ALIVE!!!
WAIT--SOMEONE'S MISSING!
DANIELLE--?
LOCKE, IS THIS SPACECRAFT--YOU?
INTERROGATIVE AFFIRMED. PLEASURE--ODD, WELCOME SENSATION--GIVEN SELF AT CONFIRMATION, YOUR HEALTH. WORRIED WAS SELF, ACTED NOT IN TIME, DID THINGS WRONG TO SAVE YOU.
I'M A LITTLE STIFF, BUT OTHERWISE OKAY.
WHAT HAPPENED TO US?
TRANSMIT SETTINGS ON STARGATE SHIFTED FRACTIONALLY AFTER INITIAL USAGE...
A BOOBY-TRAP! LILA DIDN'T WANT ANYONE FOLLOWING HER. KIND'A SUSPICIOUS, DON'T'CHA THINK?
AFFIRMATIVE. FORTUNATELY SELF POSSESSED SUFFICIENT EXCESS ENERGY...
...TO CONSTRUCT SUITABLE HABITAT FOR COMPANIONS.
IF NOT FOR THAT, WE'D ALL BE DEAD--AND IT'D BE MY FAULT! SOME LEADER I AM!
FALSE STATEMENT. HAD YOU NOT ACTED, BILLIONS WOULD HAVE CEASED TO BE. WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE?
NO.
LOCKE, CAN YOU GET US HOME?
DOUBTFUL. HOWEVER, SENSORS ARE AWARE OF ABERRANT CELESTIAL BODY APPROXIMATELY ONE LIGHT-YEAR DISTANT. PROBABILITY HIGH THAT IT IS LILA CHENEY'S DESTINATION.
SELF POSSESSES SUFFICIENT POWER TO REACH OBJECT.
LET'S GO, THEN, FAST AS YOU CAN!

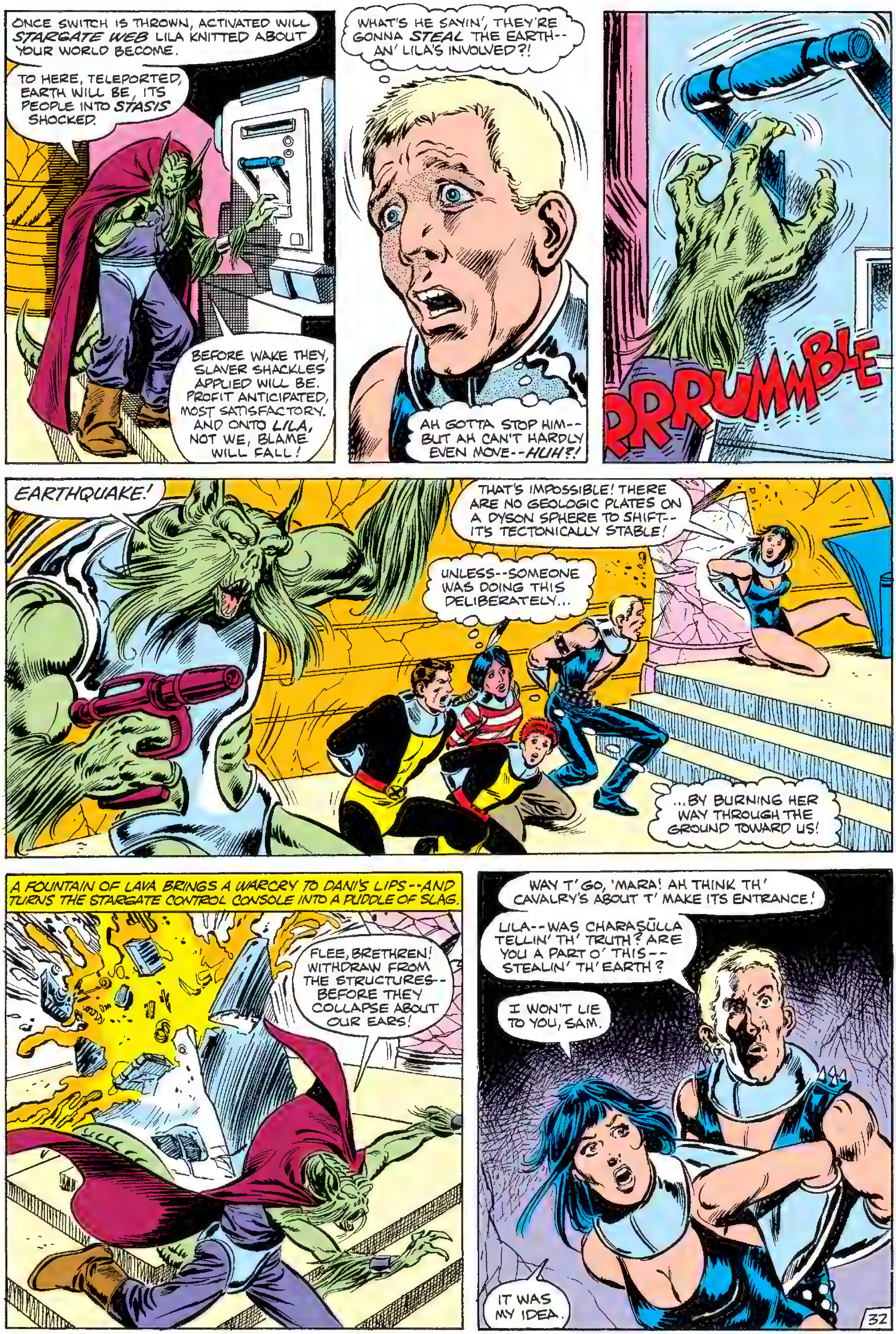

AH FEEL LIKE A PRIZE JERK.
BEAUTY, THEY SAY, IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER.
YOU CAN LAUGH, IF Y'LIKE.
AH WON'T MIND, LILA, REALLY.
GUTHRIE, YOU SHY OAF...
...THAT IS THE *LAST* THING I INTEND TO DO.
ENJOY YOURSELF, LILA.
WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING...
...I'LL BE PULLING OFF THE DOUBLE-CROSS OF ALL TIME!
CHARASŪLLA, THIS IS *HOVANNES*.
I'VE BEAMED YOU OUR COORDINATES AND OPENED A CHANNEL THROUGH THE DEFENSIVE PERIMETER FOR YOUR STRIKE FORCE.
ONCE LILA'S DEALT WITH, YOU CAN PAY ME AND TAKE THE EARTH FOR YOUR VERY OWN.

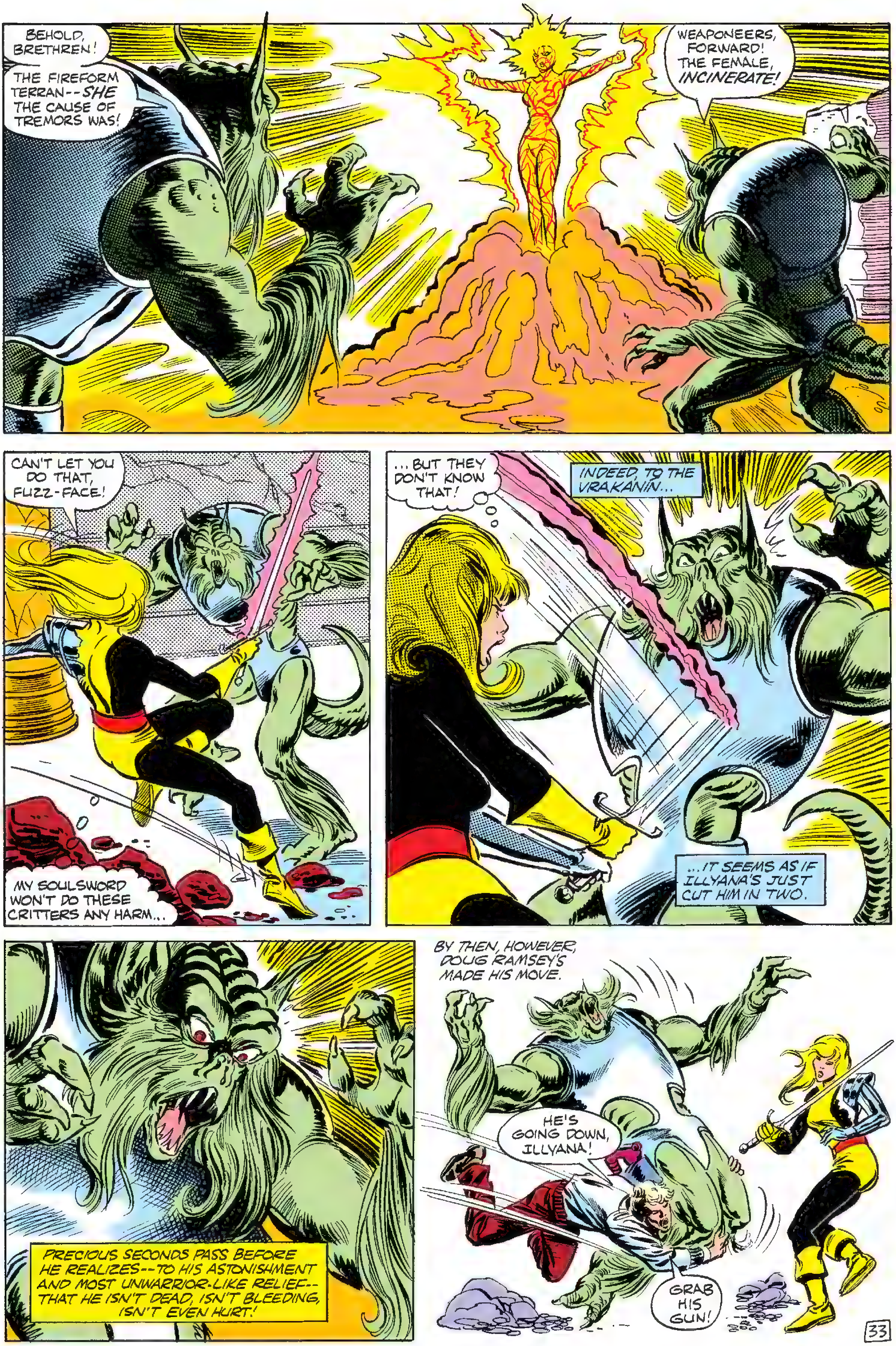

DOUGLAS, ARE YOU COMING OR WHAT--?!
HUH?! OH, YEAH, ILLYANA, SORRY-- JUST LEMME GET SOME MORE NOTES.
THIS IS GREAT!
I COULD SPEND A LIFETIME-- SCORES OF 'EM, I'LL BET-- EXPLORING THIS WORLD AND BARELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE!
UNLESS WE FIND LILA-- AND A WAY HOME--
YOU MAY GET YOUR CHANCE.
IT TOOK US A DAY TO REACH HERE, AND WE'VE BEEN WANDERING AROUND THIS CITY FOR THE BETTER PART OF ANOTHER--THE PROF MUST BE GETTING AWFUL WORRIED.
WHAT'LL HE TELL MY FOLKS?
HE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING, DON'T WORRY. HE ALWAYS DOES.
WATCH YOUR STEP.
NO PROBLEM. I'VE DONE SOME CLIMBING, I'VE GOT A GOOD HEAD FOR...
...HEIGHTS.
SO I SEE.
ILLYANA, WHERE'S THE GROUND?!
WARLOCK ESTIMATES IT'S A TEN MILE DROP.
AHUHM... WOULD YOU HOLD MY HAND, PLEASE?
LISTEN! SOMETHING'S COMING-- LOOK OUT!
CRIPES, WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
THEY ARE THE SAME CREATURES AS THE ONE WE FOUGHT IN THE THEATER!
TAKE 'EM, AMARA!
YIPE!

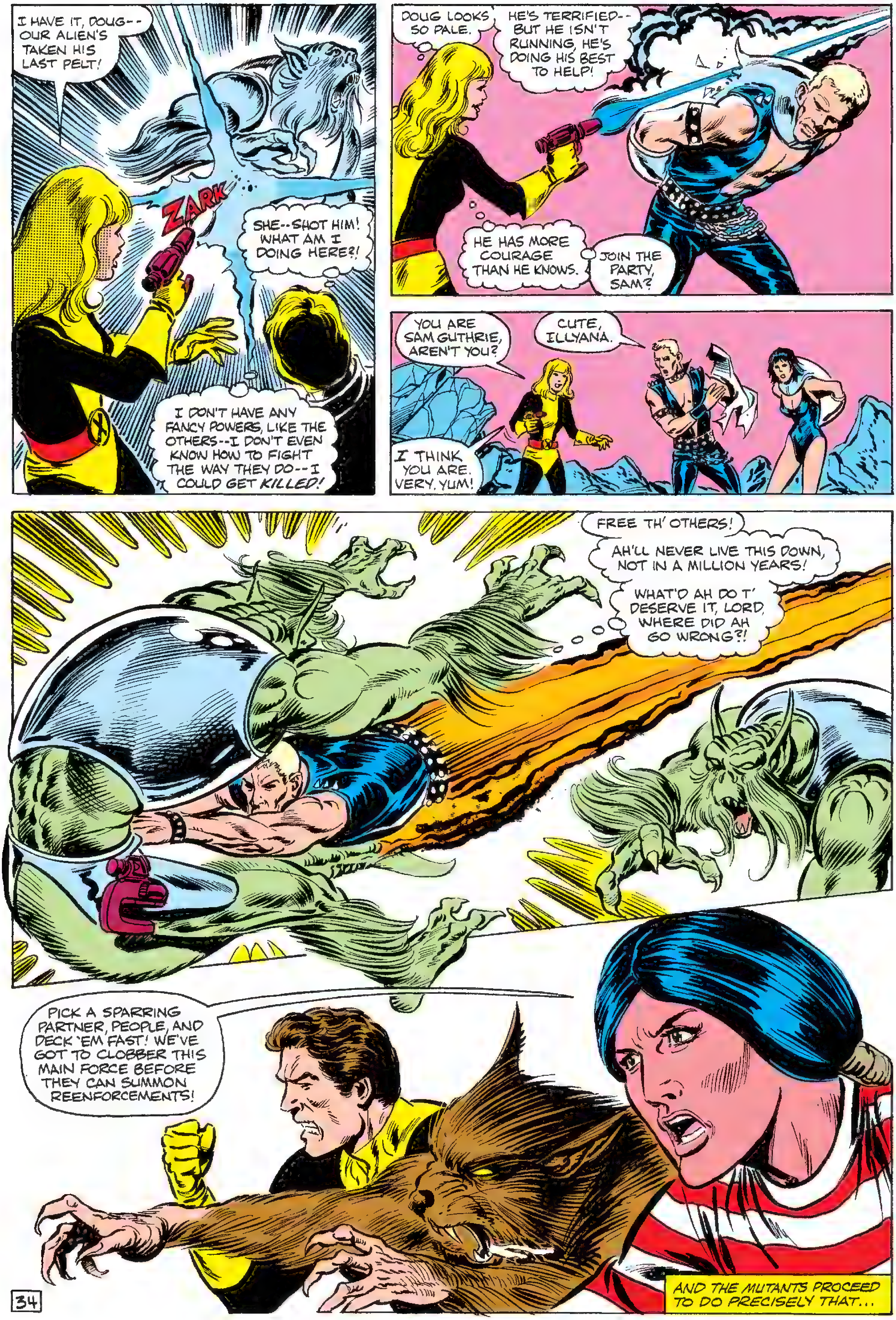

GREAT SHOT, MAGMA!
GET OFF THIS BRIDGE, WE'RE SITTING DUCKS OUT HERE! EVERYONE HEAD FOR THE TOWER!
MY LEGS-- THEY'RE GIVING WAY-- AIEEE!
RAHNE SEES HER SOUL-MATE FALL AND THROUGH THEIR RAPPORT...
...FEELS HER AGONY...
DINNA FRET, DANI! I'LL HAVE YOU UNDER COVER IN A JIFF!
DARN, DARN, DARN-- I'M NO BLASTED USE IN A FIGHT, RAHNE. I CAN'T RUN, I CAN'T EVEN STAND--!
OH, HUSH! WHAT D'YOU EXPECT--
--D'MANDIN SO MUCH O' YUIRSELF...
...BEFORE YOU'RE FULLY HEALED?!
AEIOWW!!
SKWAM
THE MONSTERS SHATTERED THE BRIDGE--RAHNE AND DANI ARE FALLING!

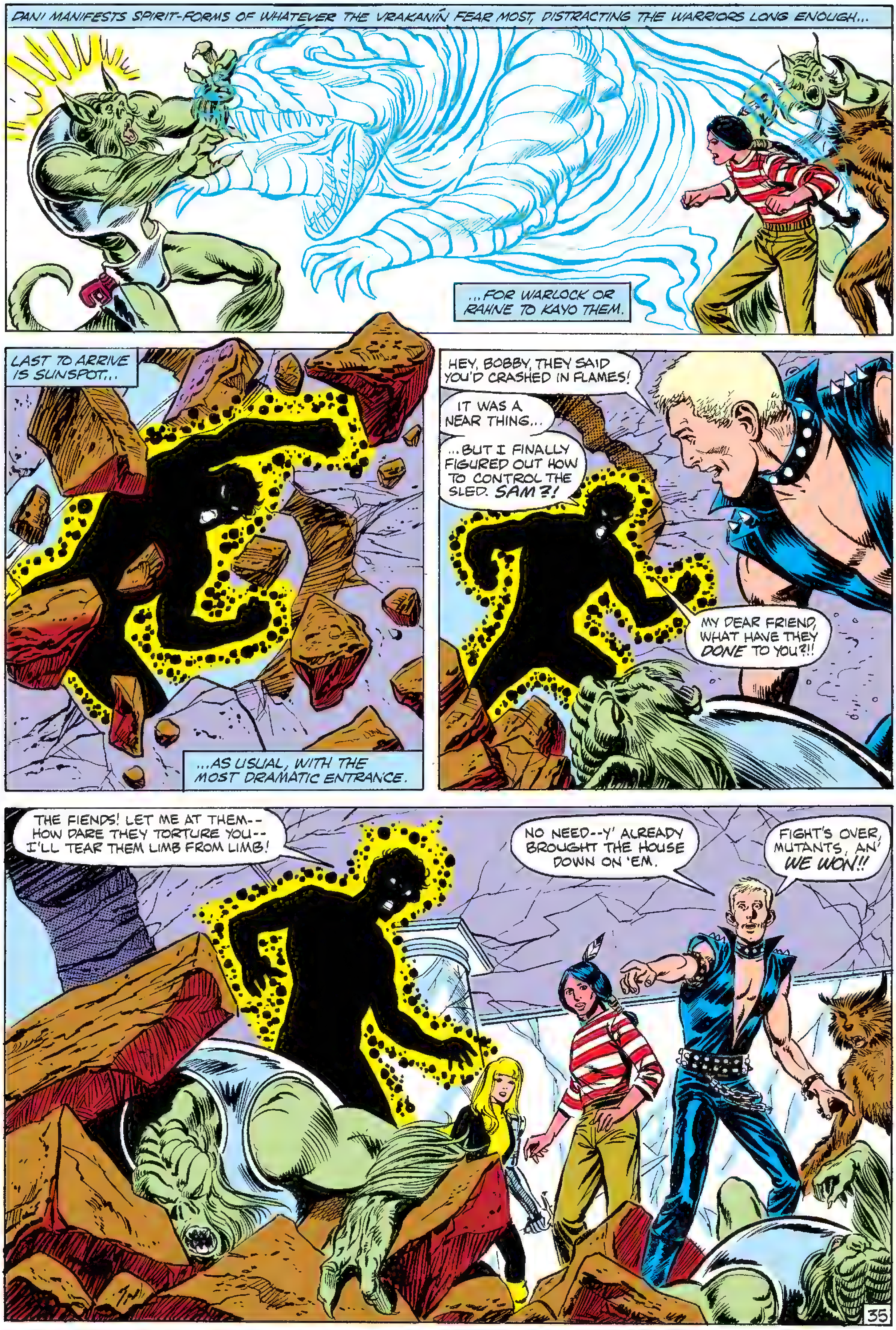

WE'RE SO HIGH, IT'LL TAKE A WHILE FOR THEM TO HIT THE GROUND.
IF I CAN GRAB A SKYSLED...
...I'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO REACH THEM!
EVEN AS SUNSPOT ACCOMPLISHES HIS INITIAL OBJECTIVE...
...WARLOCK TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO A FLOATER AND CATCHES THE GIRLS.
UNFORTUNATELY...
AT THE ELECTRO-NET'S TOUCH, ALL THREE MUTANTS ARE STUNNED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, WHILE, NOT FAR AWAY...
...ROBERTO IS DISCOVERING, TO HIS DISMAY, THAT SEIZING A SLED...
SPUT
COUGH
KCHKCHK
...IS A FAR CRY FROM FLYING IT.
ZOWWWWWW
OH, NOOOOOOO...

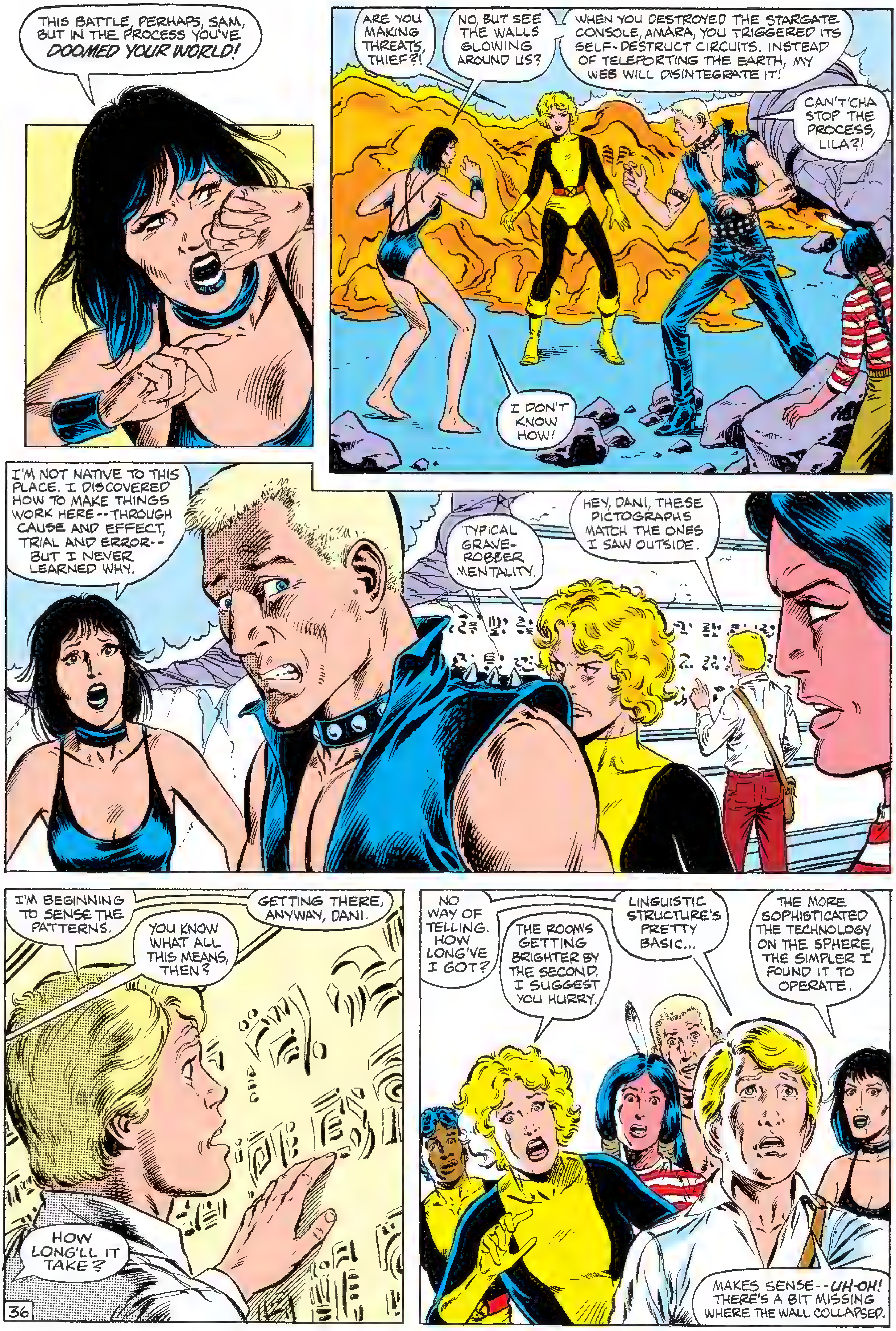

ONE OF THEIR NUMBER IS PRESUMED CRASHED, LORD.
CADRES ARE SEARCHING FOR THE REMAINDER.
THAT'S A BREAK FOR US. THEY COULD BE WRONG ABOUT 'BERTO. DOUG WON'T BE MUCH HELP, BUT SO LONG AS AMARA AND ILLYANA ARE FREE, WE'RE NOT BEATEN, BY A LONG SHOT.
YOUR EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT, TERRANS. SLAVER SHACKLES, YOU WEAR, RENDER YOU HELPLESS.
GOOD PRICE, YOU SHALL BRING, WHEN ALONG WITH YOUR WORLD YOU ARE SOLD. AS FOR THIEF, DARLING LILA...
...KNOWS SHE INTO WHOSE HANDS SHE WILL FALL. HOPE IS MINE THAT A LONG TIME DYING SHE WILL BE.
DANI, IS THAT SAM?
KIND'A LOOKS LIKE HIM, RAHNEY...
...BUT I'M NOT CERTAIN.
LORD, OPEN A PIT AND SWALLOW ME WHOLE. BAD ENOUGH AH GOTTA LOOK LIKE THIS, BUT T'HAVE M' FRIENDS **SEE** ME--!
POOR LILA, LOOKS SO UPSET DOES SHE.
PLACED YOUR TRUST IN HOVANNES, MORE FOOL YOU.
YOU BETRAYED ME, PHIL? WHY?!
CHARASŪLLA MADE ME AN OFFER I COULDN'T REFUSE, HON. NOTHIN' PERSONAL, THIS IS BUSINESS.
GREEDY MAN.
BUT ALSO STUPID.
TO THINK CHARASŪLLA WOULD SUCH A BARGAIN HONOR.

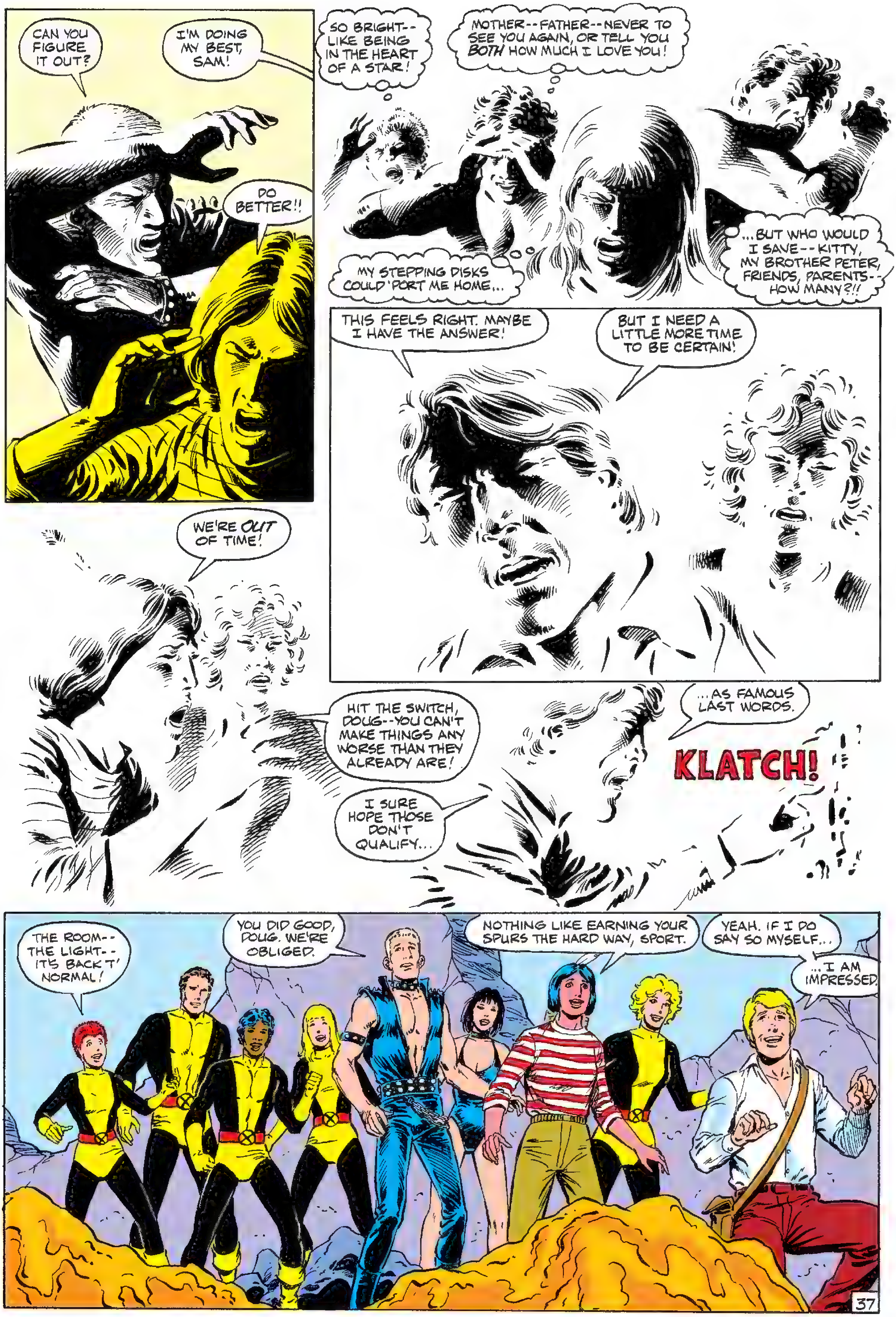

ONCE SWITCH IS THROWN, ACTIVATED WILL *STARGATE WEB* LILA KNITTED ABOUT YOUR WORLD BECOME.
TO HERE, TELEPORTED, EARTH WILL BE, ITS PEOPLE INTO *STASIS* SHOCKED.
BEFORE WAKE THEY, SLAVER SHACKLES APPLIED WILL BE. PROFIT ANTICIPATED, MOST SATISFACTORY. AND ONTO *LILA*, NOT WE, BLAME WILL FALL!
WHAT'S HE SAYIN', THEY'RE GONNA *STEAL* THE EARTH-- AN' LILA'S INVOLVED?!
AH GOTTA STOP HIM-- BUT AH CAN'T HARDLY EVEN MOVE--*HUH?!*
RRRUMMBLE
*EARTHQUAKE!*
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THERE ARE NO GEOLOGIC PLATES ON A DYSON SPHERE TO SHIFT-- IT'S TECTONICALLY STABLE!
UNLESS--SOMEONE WAS DOING THIS DELIBERATELY...
...BY BURNING HER WAY THROUGH THE GROUND TOWARD US!
*A FOUNTAIN OF LAVA BRINGS A WARCRY TO DANI'S LIPS--AND TURNS THE STARGATE CONTROL CONSOLE INTO A PUDDLE OF SLAG.*
FLEE, BRETHREN! WITHDRAW FROM THE STRUCTURES-- BEFORE THEY COLLAPSE ABOUT OUR EARS!
WAY T' GO, 'MARA! AH THINK TH' CAVALRY'S ABOUT T' MAKE ITS ENTRANCE!
LILA--WAS CHARAŞŪLLA TELLIN' TH' TRUTH? ARE YOU A PART O' THIS-- STEALIN' TH' EARTH?
I WON'T LIE TO YOU, SAM.
IT WAS MY IDEA.

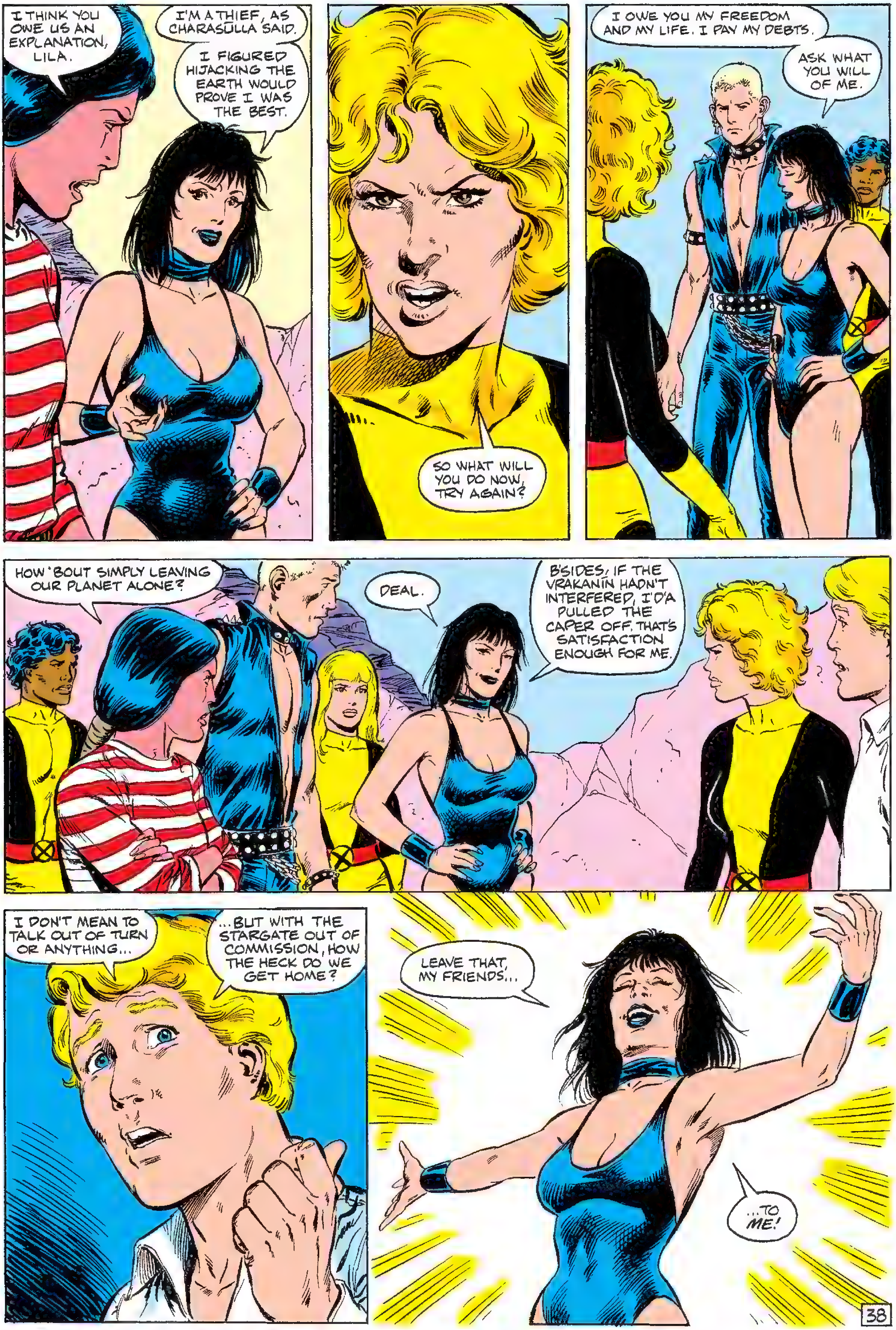

BEHOLD, BRETHREN!
THE FIREFORM TERRAN--SHE THE CAUSE OF TREMORS WAS!
WEAPONEERS, FORWARD! THE FEMALE, INCINERATE!
CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT, FUZZ-FACE!
MY SOULSWORD WON'T DO THESE CRITTERS ANY HARM...
...BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THAT!
INDEED, TO THE VRAKANIN...
...IT SEEMS AS IF ILLYANA'S JUST CUT HIM IN TWO.
PRECIOUS SECONDS PASS BEFORE HE REALIZES--TO HIS ASTONISHMENT AND MOST UNWARRIOR-LIKE RELIEF--THAT HE ISN'T DEAD, ISN'T BLEEDING, ISN'T EVEN HURT!
BY THEN, HOWEVER, DOUG RAMSEY'S MADE HIS MOVE.
HE'S GOING DOWN, ILLYANA!
GRAB HIS GUN!

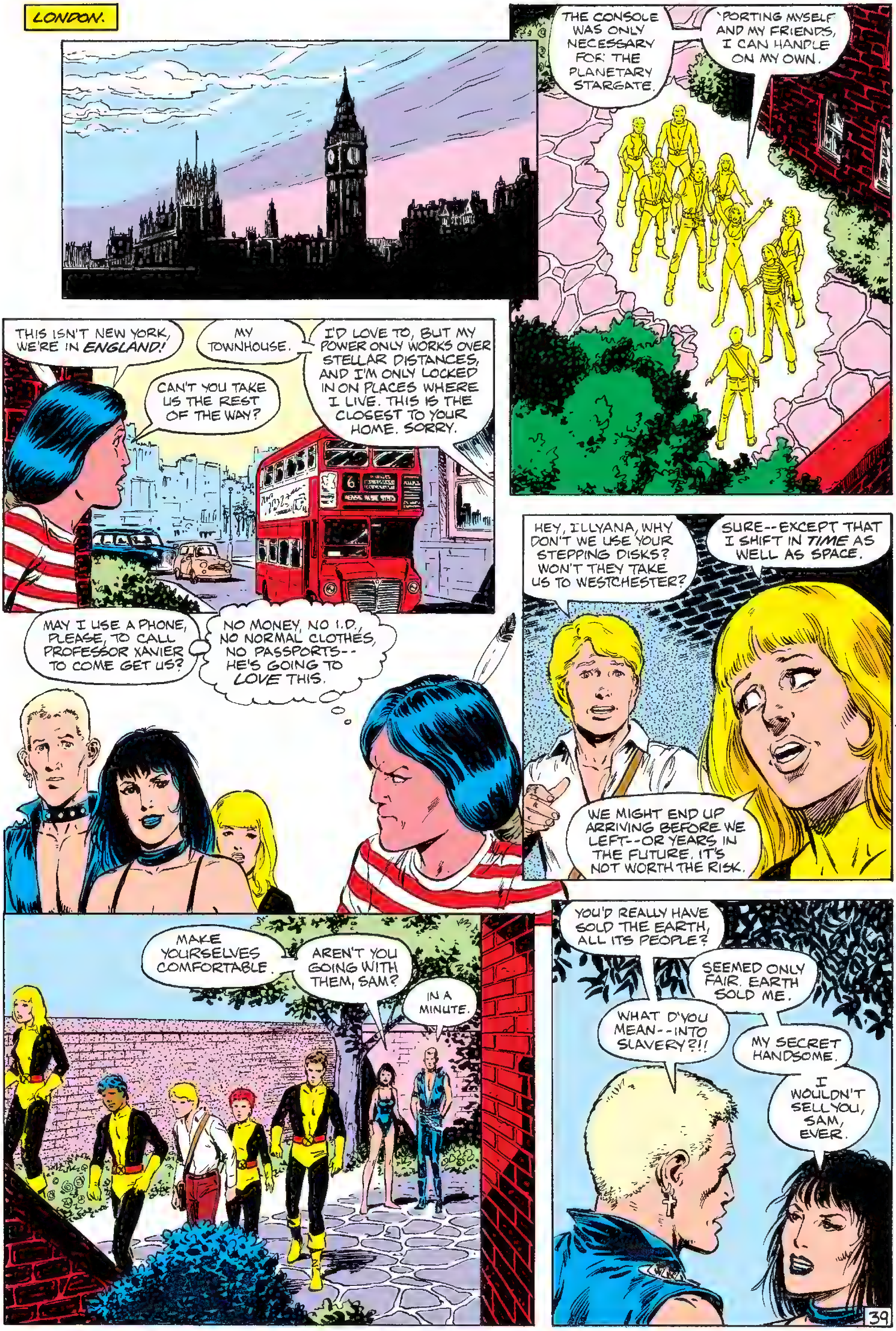

I HAVE IT, DOUG-- OUR ALIEN'S TAKEN HIS LAST PELT!
ZARK
SHE--SHOT HIM! WHAT AM I DOING HERE?!
I DON'T HAVE ANY FANCY POWERS, LIKE THE OTHERS--I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO FIGHT THE WAY THEY DO--I COULD GET *KILLED!*
DOUG LOOKS SO PALE.
HE'S TERRIFIED-- BUT HE ISN'T RUNNING, HE'S DOING HIS BEST TO HELP!
HE HAS MORE COURAGE THAN HE KNOWS.
JOIN THE PARTY, SAM?
YOU ARE SAM GUTHRIE, AREN'T YOU?
CUTE, ILLYANA.
I THINK YOU ARE. VERY. YUM!
FREE TH' OTHERS!
AH'LL NEVER LIVE THIS DOWN, NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!
WHAT'D AH DO T' DESERVE IT, LORD, WHERE DID AH GO WRONG?!
PICK A SPARRING PARTNER, PEOPLE, AND DECK 'EM FAST! WE'VE GOT TO CLOBBER THIS MAIN FORCE BEFORE THEY CAN SUMMON REENFORCEMENTS!
*AND THE MUTANTS PROCEED TO DO PRECISELY THAT...*

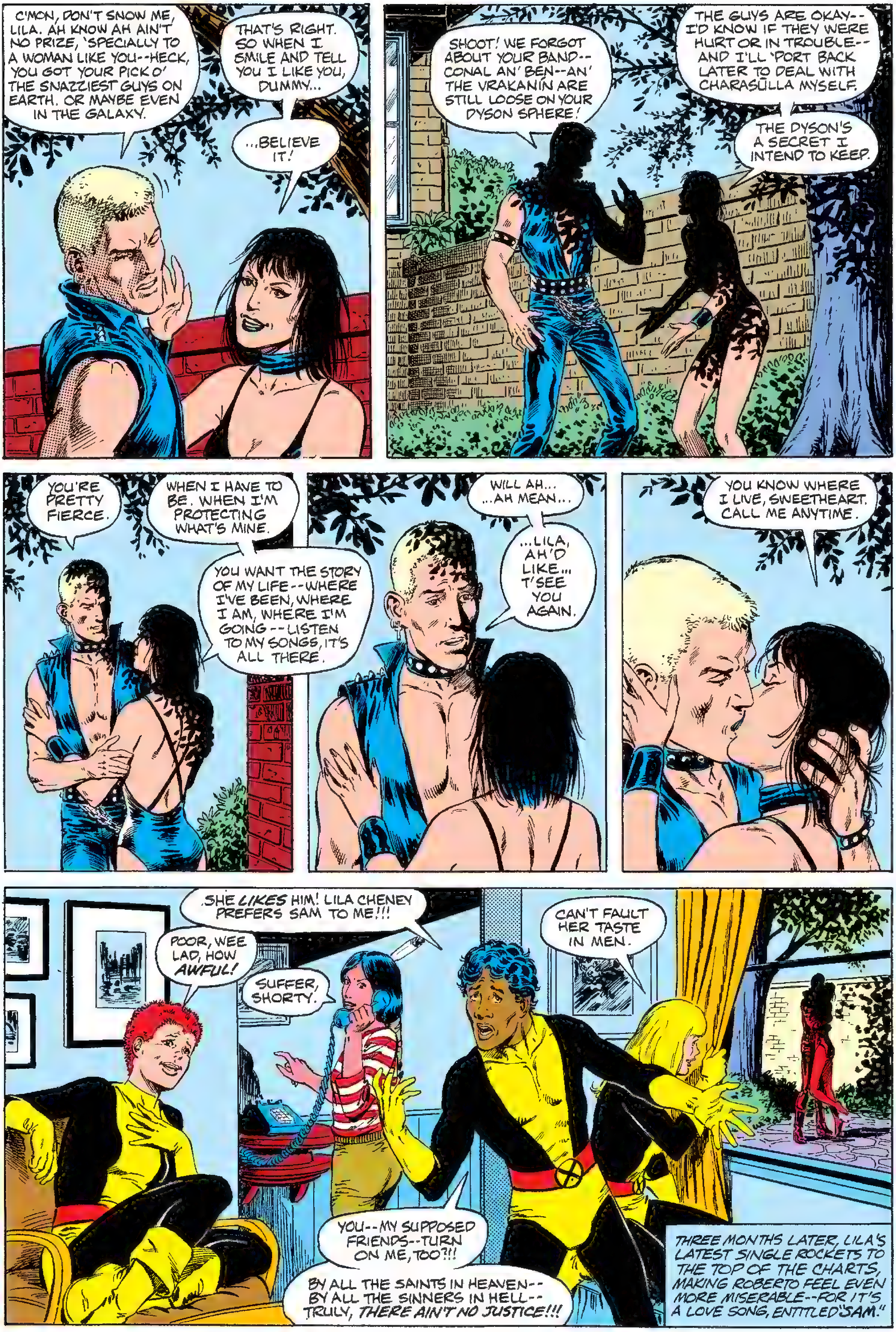

DANI MANIFESTS SPIRIT-FORMS OF WHATEVER THE VRAKANÍN FEAR MOST, DISTRACTING THE WARRIORS LONG ENOUGH...
...FOR WARLOCK OR RAHNE TO KAYO THEM.
LAST TO ARRIVE IS SUNSPOT...
...AS USUAL, WITH THE MOST DRAMATIC ENTRANCE.
HEY, BOBBY, THEY SAID YOU'D CRASHED IN FLAMES!
IT WAS A NEAR THING...
...BUT I FINALLY FIGURED OUT HOW TO CONTROL THE SLED. SAM ?!
MY DEAR FRIEND, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?!!
THE FIENDS! LET ME AT THEM-- HOW DARE THEY TORTURE YOU-- I'LL TEAR THEM LIMB FROM LIMB!
NO NEED--Y' ALREADY BROUGHT THE HOUSE DOWN ON 'EM.
FIGHT'S OVER, MUTANTS, AN' WE WON!!


THIS BATTLE, PERHAPS, SAM, BUT IN THE PROCESS YOU'VE *DOOMED YOUR WORLD!*
ARE YOU MAKING THREATS, THIEF?!
NO, BUT SEE THE WALLS GLOWING AROUND US?
WHEN YOU DESTROYED THE STARGATE CONSOLE, AMARA, YOU TRIGGERED ITS SELF-DESTRUCT CIRCUITS. INSTEAD OF TELEPORTING THE EARTH, MY WEB WILL DISINTEGRATE IT!
CAN'T'CHA STOP THE PROCESS, LILA?!
I DON'T KNOW HOW!
I'M NOT NATIVE TO THIS PLACE. I DISCOVERED HOW TO MAKE THINGS WORK HERE--THROUGH CAUSE AND EFFECT, TRIAL AND ERROR--BUT I NEVER LEARNED WHY.
TYPICAL GRAVE-ROBBER MENTALITY.
HEY, DANI, THESE PICTOGRAPHS MATCH THE ONES I SAW OUTSIDE.
I'M BEGINNING TO SENSE THE PATTERNS.
YOU KNOW WHAT ALL THIS MEANS, THEN?
GETTING THERE, ANYWAY, DANI.
HOW LONG'LL IT TAKE?
NO WAY OF TELLING. HOW LONG'VE I GOT?
THE ROOM'S GETTING BRIGHTER BY THE SECOND. I SUGGEST YOU HURRY.
LINGUISTIC STRUCTURE'S PRETTY BASIC...
THE MORE SOPHISTICATED THE TECHNOLOGY ON THE SPHERE, THE SIMPLER I FOUND IT TO OPERATE.
MAKES SENSE--*UH-OH!* THERE'S A BIT MISSING WHERE THE WALL COLLAPSED.


CAN YOU FIGURE IT OUT?
I'M DOING MY BEST, SAM!
DO BETTER!!
SO BRIGHT--LIKE BEING IN THE HEART OF A STAR!
MOTHER--FATHER--NEVER TO SEE YOU AGAIN, OR TELL YOU *BOTH* HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU!
MY STEPPING DISKS COULD 'PORT ME HOME...
...BUT WHO WOULD I SAVE--KITTY, MY BROTHER PETER, FRIENDS, PARENTS--HOW MANY?!!
THIS FEELS RIGHT. MAYBE I HAVE THE ANSWER!
BUT I NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME TO BE CERTAIN!
WE'RE *OUT* OF TIME!
HIT THE SWITCH, DOUG--YOU CAN'T MAKE THINGS ANY WORSE THAN THEY ALREADY ARE!
I SURE HOPE THOSE DON'T QUALIFY...
...AS FAMOUS LAST WORDS.
KLATCH!
THE ROOM--THE LIGHT--IT'S BACK T' NORMAL!
YOU DID GOOD, DOUG. WE'RE OBLIGED.
NOTHING LIKE EARNING YOUR SPURS THE HARD WAY, SPORT.
YEAH. IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF...
...I AM IMPRESSED.


I THINK YOU OWE US AN EXPLANATION, LILA.
I'M A THIEF, AS CHARASULLA SAID.
I FIGURED HIJACKING THE EARTH WOULD PROVE I WAS THE BEST.
SO WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW, TRY AGAIN?
I OWE YOU MY FREEDOM AND MY LIFE. I PAY MY DEBTS.
ASK WHAT YOU WILL OF ME.
HOW 'BOUT SIMPLY LEAVING OUR PLANET ALONE?
DEAL.
B'SIDES, IF THE VRAKANIN HADN'T INTERFERED, I'D'A PULLED THE CAPER OFF. THAT'S SATISFACTION ENOUGH FOR ME.
I DON'T MEAN TO TALK OUT OF TURN OR ANYTHING...
...BUT WITH THE STARGATE OUT OF COMMISSION, HOW THE HECK DO WE GET HOME?
LEAVE THAT, MY FRIENDS...
...TO *ME!*


LONDON.
THE CONSOLE WAS ONLY NECESSARY FOR THE PLANETARY STARGATE.
'PORTING MYSELF AND MY FRIENDS, I CAN HANDLE ON MY OWN.
THIS ISN'T NEW YORK, WE'RE IN *ENGLAND!*
MY TOWNHOUSE.
CAN'T YOU TAKE US THE REST OF THE WAY?
I'D LOVE TO, BUT MY POWER ONLY WORKS OVER STELLAR DISTANCES, AND I'M ONLY LOCKED IN ON PLACES WHERE I LIVE. THIS IS THE CLOSEST TO YOUR HOME. SORRY.
MAY I USE A PHONE, PLEASE, TO CALL PROFESSOR XAVIER TO COME GET US?
NO MONEY, NO I.D., NO NORMAL CLOTHES, NO PASSPORTS-- HE'S GOING TO *LOVE* THIS.
HEY, ILLYANA, WHY DON'T WE USE YOUR STEPPING DISKS? WON'T THEY TAKE US TO WESTCHESTER?
SURE--EXCEPT THAT I SHIFT IN *TIME* AS WELL AS SPACE.
WE MIGHT END UP ARRIVING BEFORE WE LEFT--OR YEARS IN THE FUTURE. IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK.
MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE.
AREN'T YOU GOING WITH THEM, SAM?
IN A MINUTE.
YOU'D REALLY HAVE SOLD THE EARTH, ALL ITS PEOPLE?
SEEMED ONLY FAIR. EARTH SOLD ME.
WHAT D'YOU MEAN--INTO SLAVERY?!!
MY SECRET HANDSOME.
I WOULDN'T SELL YOU, SAM, EVER.


C'MON, DON'T SNOW ME, LILA. AH KNOW AH AIN'T NO PRIZE, 'SPECIALLY TO A WOMAN LIKE YOU--HECK, YOU GOT YOUR PICK O' THE SNAZZIEST GUYS ON EARTH. OR MAYBE EVEN IN THE GALAXY.
THAT'S RIGHT. SO WHEN I SMILE AND TELL YOU I LIKE YOU, DUMMY...
...BELIEVE IT!
SHOOT! WE FORGOT ABOUT YOUR BAND--CONAL AN' BEN--AN' THE VRAKANIN ARE STILL LOOSE ON YOUR DYSON SPHERE!
THE GUYS ARE OKAY--I'D KNOW IF THEY WERE HURT OR IN TROUBLE--AND I'LL 'PORT BACK LATER TO DEAL WITH CHARASÛLLA MYSELF.
THE DYSON'S A SECRET I INTEND TO KEEP.
YOU'RE PRETTY FIERCE.
WHEN I HAVE TO BE. WHEN I'M PROTECTING WHAT'S MINE.
YOU WANT THE STORY OF MY LIFE--WHERE I'VE BEEN, WHERE I AM, WHERE I'M GOING--LISTEN TO MY SONGS, IT'S ALL THERE.
WILL AH... ...AH MEAN...
...LILA, AH'D LIKE... T'SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE, SWEETHEART. CALL ME ANYTIME.
SHE LIKES HIM! LILA CHENEY PREFERS SAM TO ME!!!
POOR, WEE LAD, HOW AWFUL!
SUFFER, SHORTY.
CAN'T FAULT HER TASTE IN MEN.
YOU--MY SUPPOSED FRIENDS--TURN ON ME, TOO?!!
BY ALL THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN--BY ALL THE SINNERS IN HELL--TRULY, THERE AIN'T NO JUSTICE!!!
THREE MONTHS LATER, LILA'S LATEST SINGLE ROCKETS TO THE TOP OF THE CHARTS, MAKING ROBERTO FEEL EVEN MORE MISERABLE--FOR IT'S A LOVE SONG, ENTITLED "SAM."

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THE NEW MUTANTS
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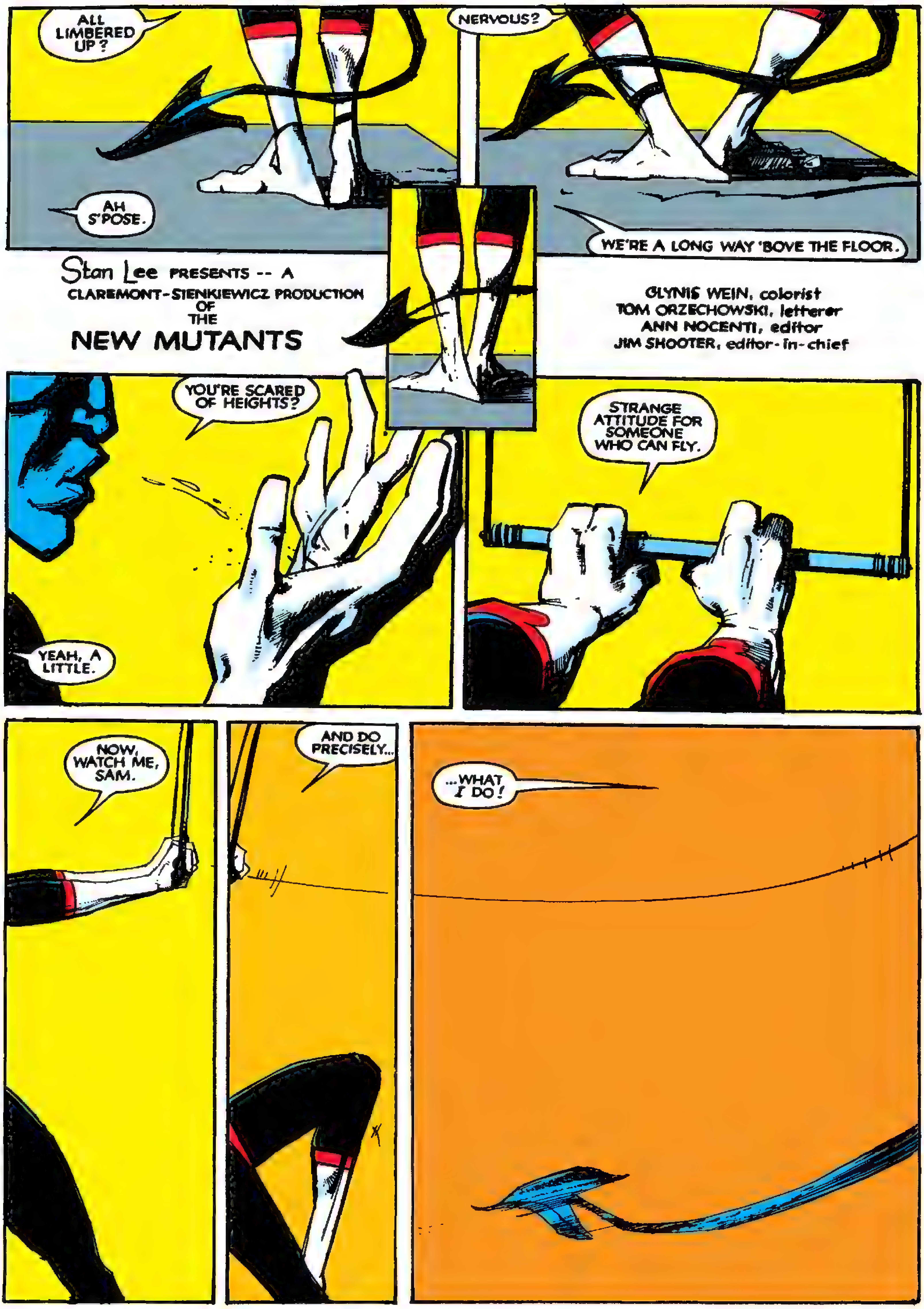
once upon a time...


ALL LIMBERED UP?
AH S'POSE.
NERVOUS?
WE'RE A LONG WAY 'BOVE THE FLOOR.
YOU'RE SCARED OF HEIGHTS?
YEAH, A LITTLE.
STRANGE ATTITUDE FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN FLY.
NOW, WATCH ME, SAM.
AND DO PRECISELY...
...WHAT I DO!

Stan Lee PRESENTS -- A
CLAREMONT-SIENKIEWICZ PRODUCTION
OF
THE

# NEW MUTANTS

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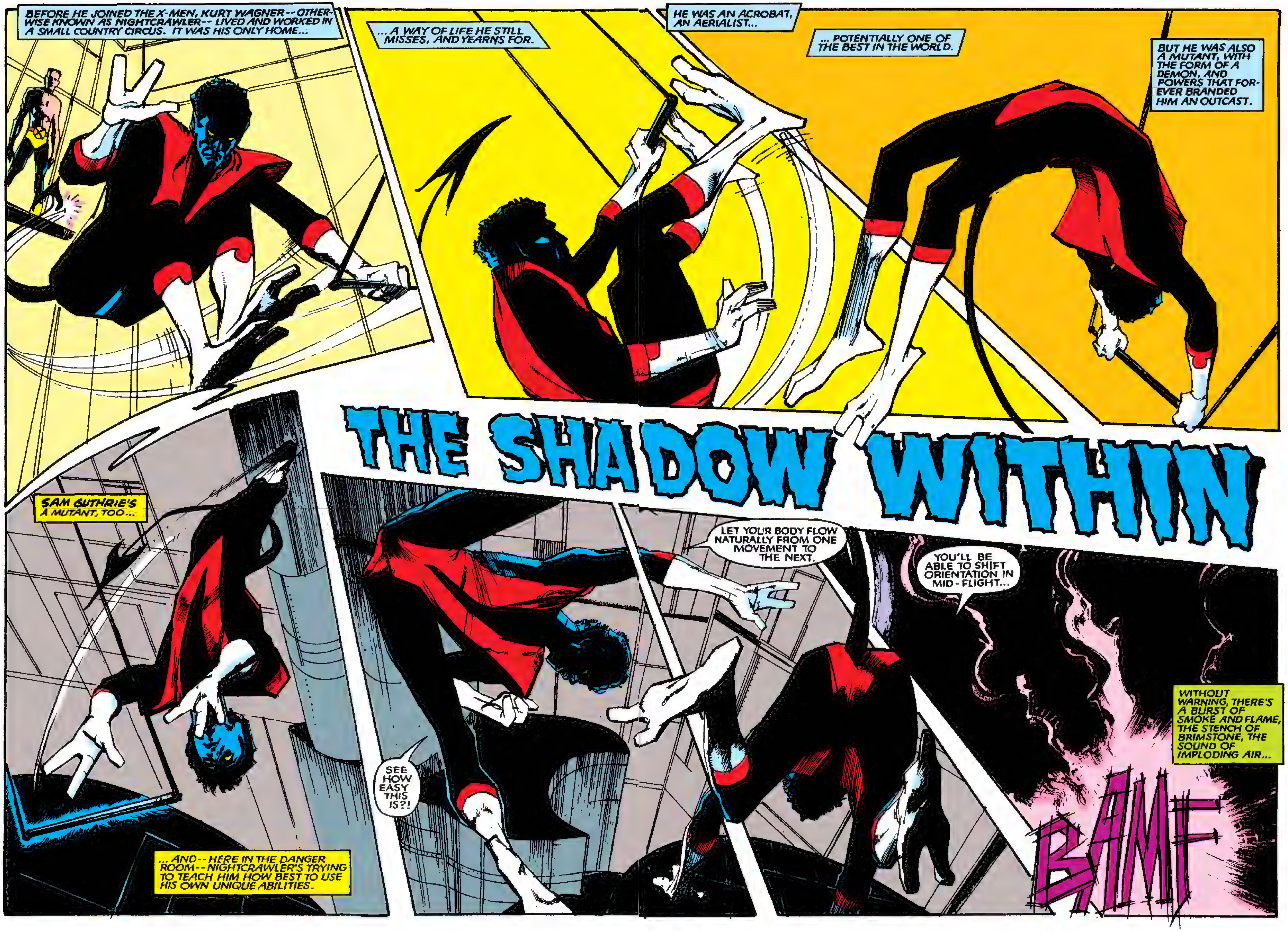
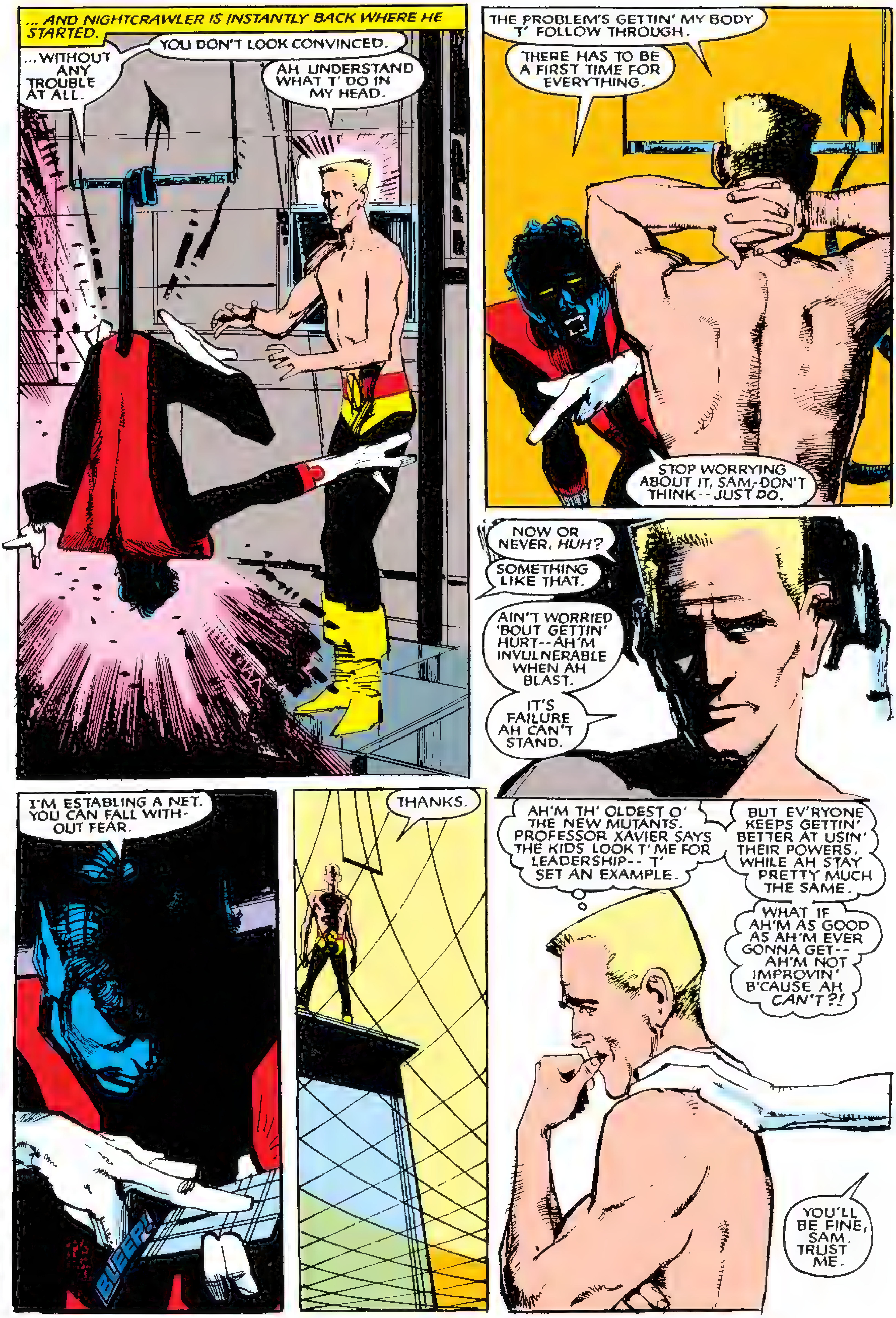
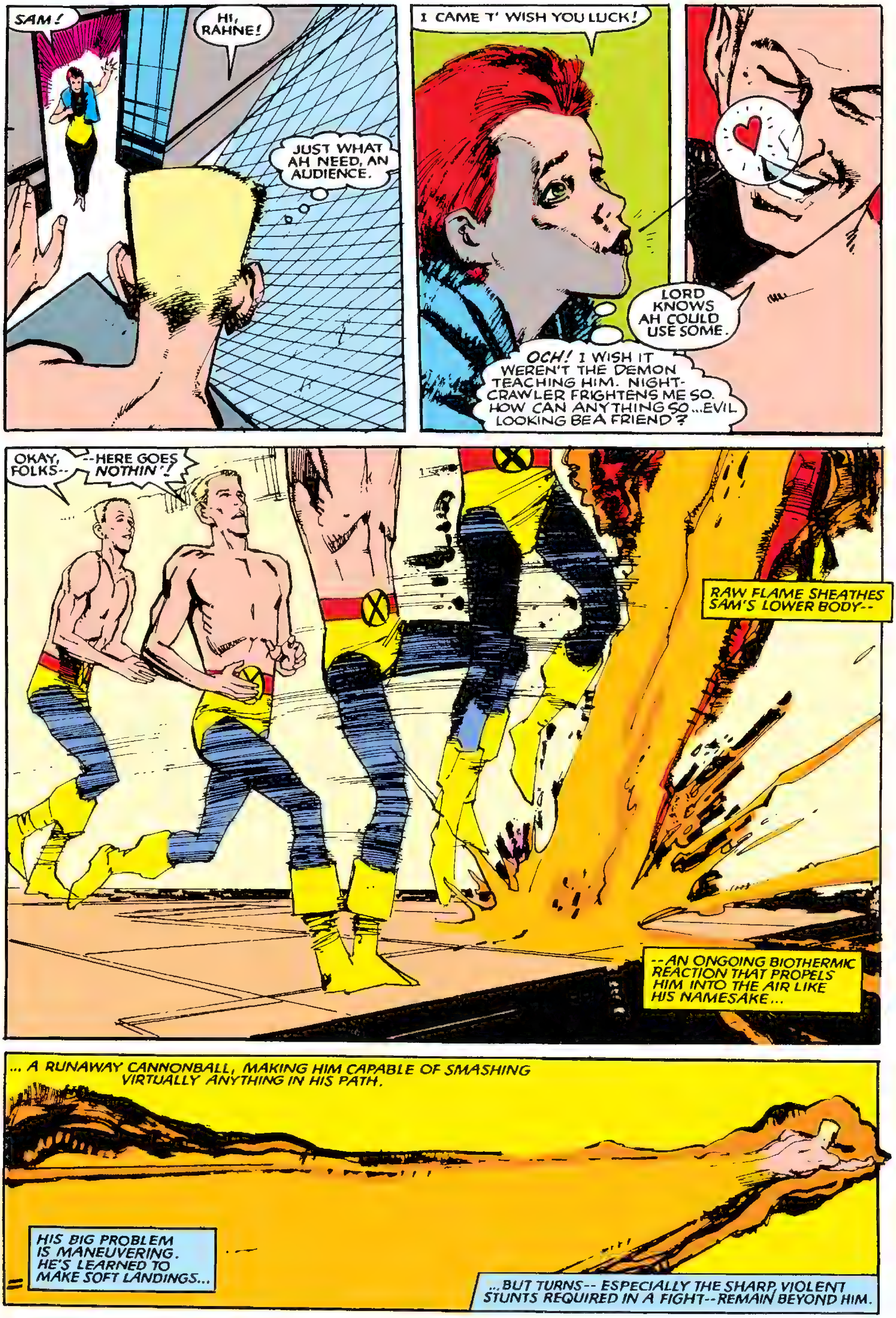
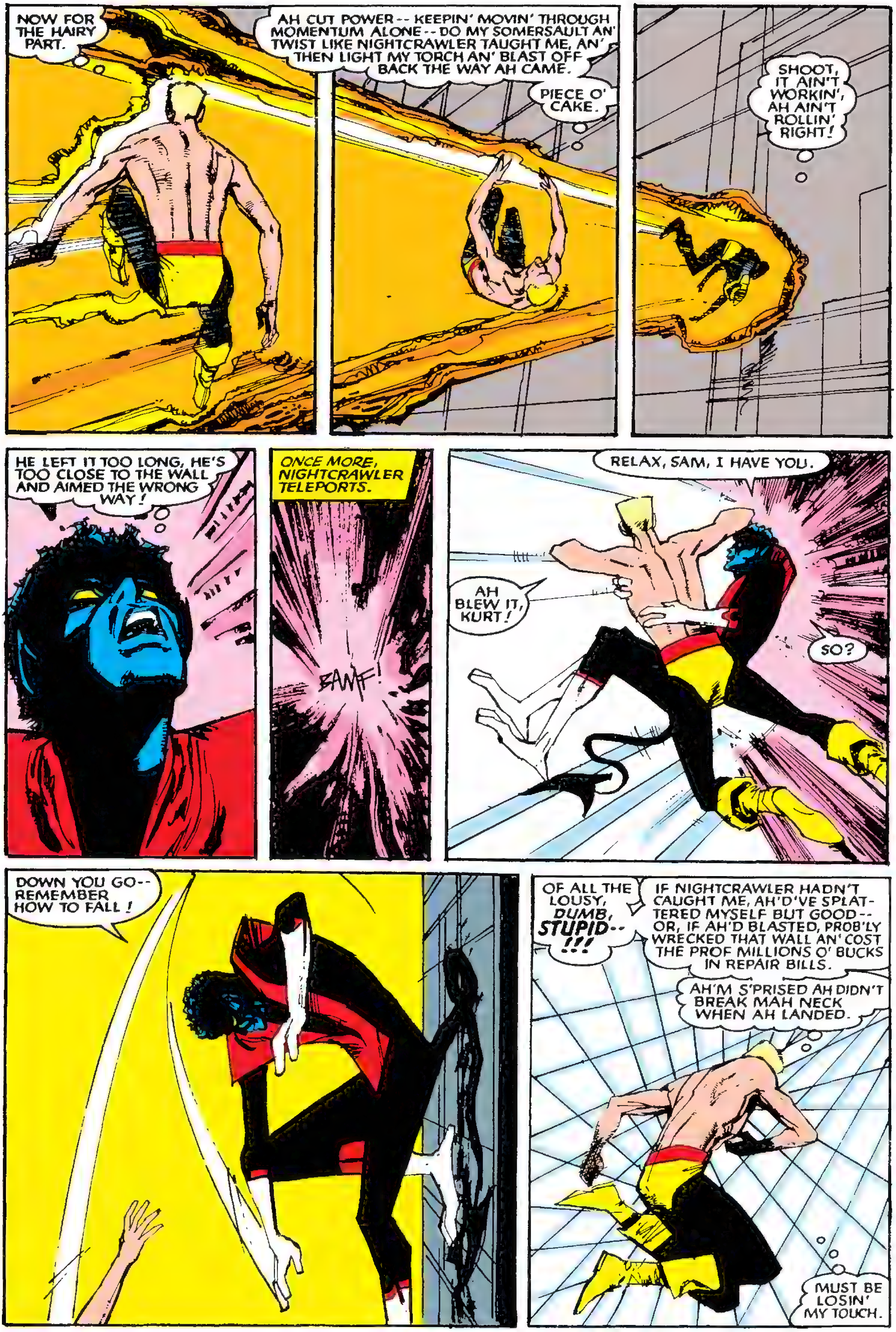
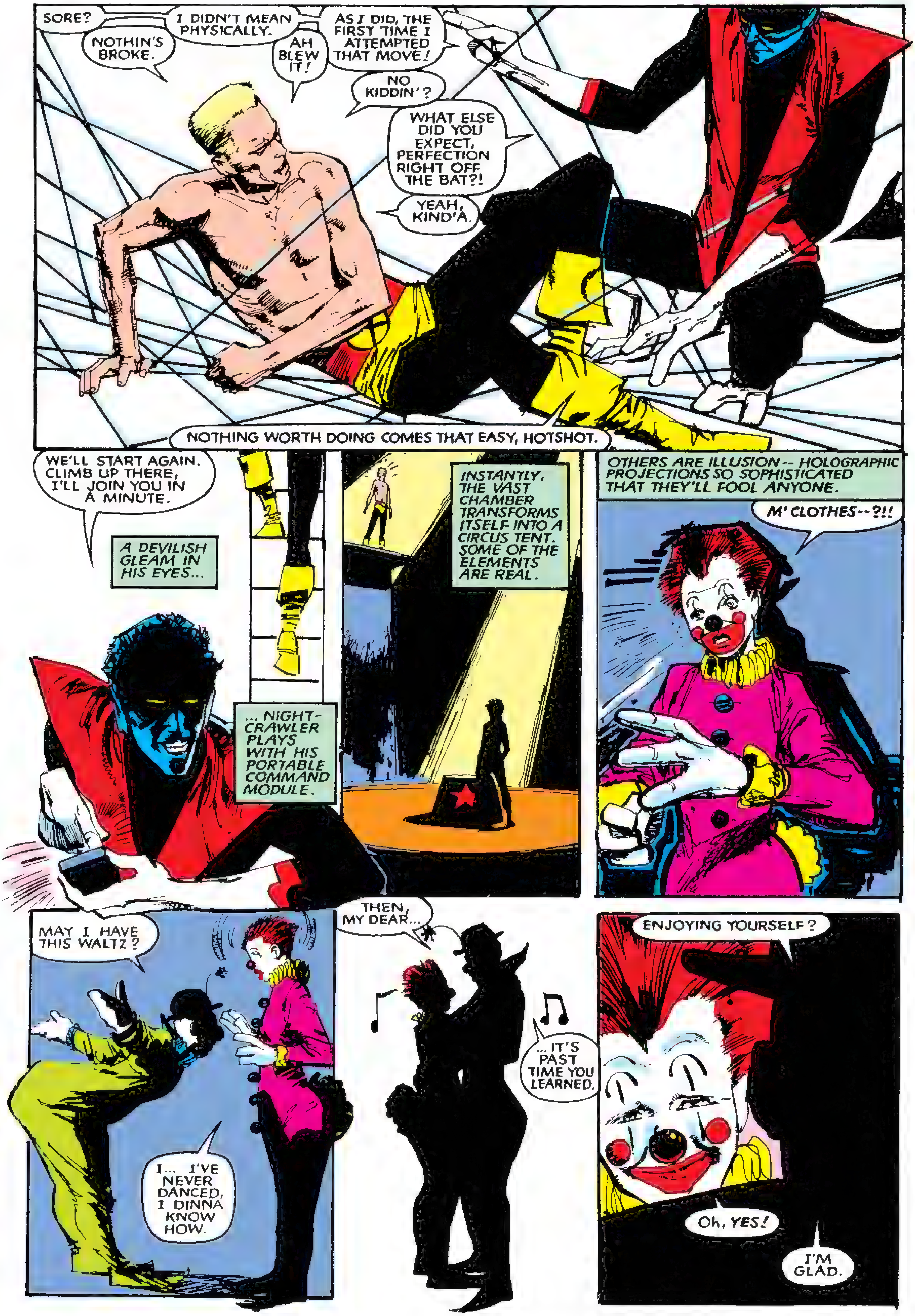
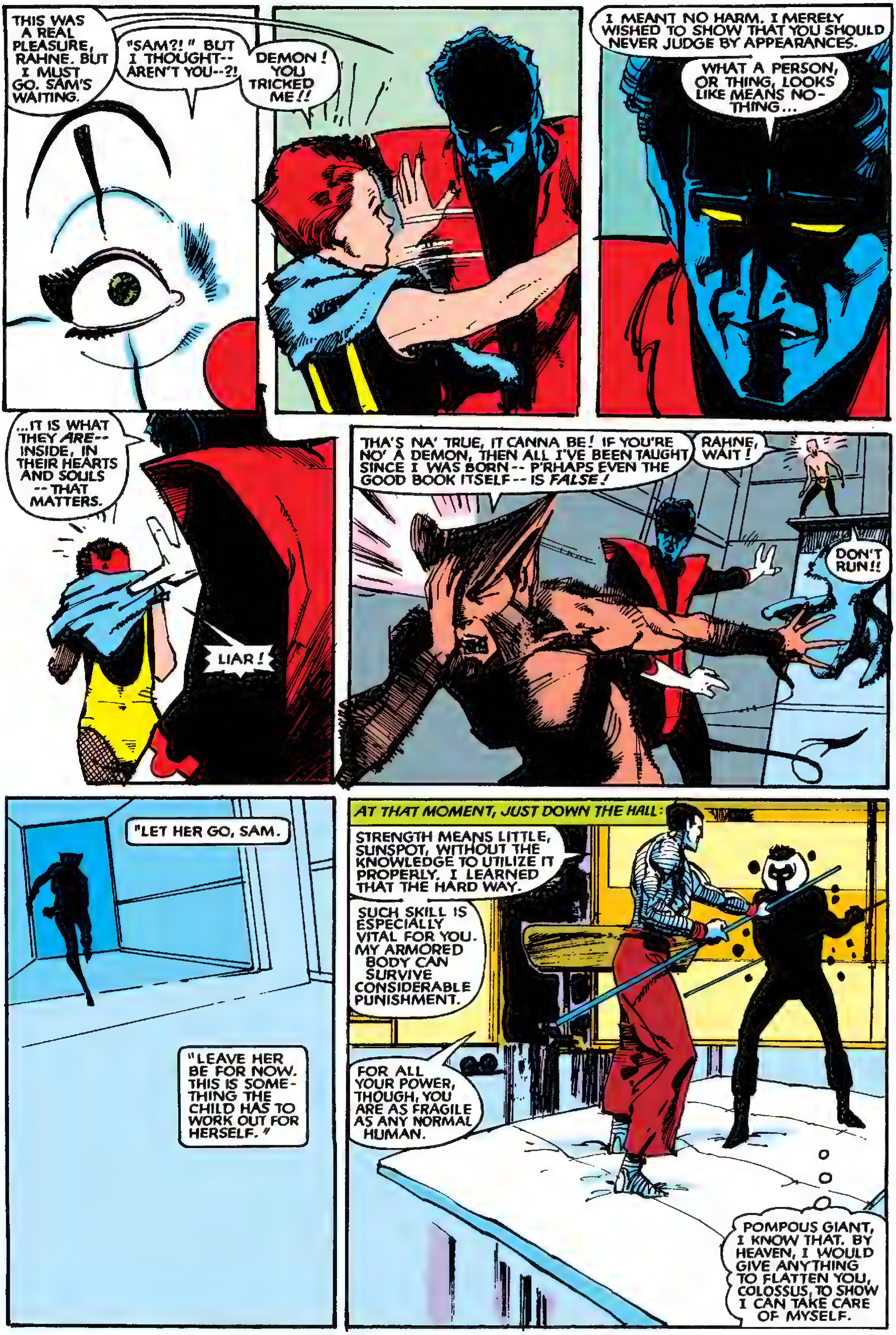

BEFORE HE JOINED THE X-MEN, KURT WAGNER--OTHERWISE KNOWN AS NIGHTCRAWLER-- LIVED AND WORKED IN A SMALL COUNTRY CIRCUS. IT WAS HIS ONLY HOME...
...A WAY OF LIFE HE STILL MISSES, AND YEARNS FOR.
HE WAS AN ACROBAT, AN AERIALIST...
...POTENTIALLY ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD.
BUT HE WAS ALSO A MUTANT, WITH THE FORM OF A DEMON, AND POWERS THAT FOREVER BRANDED HIM AN OUTCAST.
THE SHADOW WITHIN
SAM GUTHRIE'S A MUTANT, TOO...
...AND--HERE IN THE DANGER ROOM--NIGHTCRAWLER'S TRYING TO TEACH HIM HOW BEST TO USE HIS OWN UNIQUE ABILITIES.
SEE HOW EASY THIS IS?!
LET YOUR BODY FLOW NATURALLY FROM ONE MOVEMENT TO THE NEXT.
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SHIFT ORIENTATION IN MID-FLIGHT...
WITHOUT WARNING, THERE'S A BURST OF SMOKE AND FLAME, THE STENCH OF BRIMSTONE, THE SOUND OF IMPLODING AIR...
BAMF


...AND NIGHTCRAWLER IS INSTANTLY BACK WHERE HE STARTED.
...WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE AT ALL.
YOU DON'T LOOK CONVINCED.
AH UNDERSTAND WHAT T' DO IN MY HEAD.
THE PROBLEM'S GETTIN' MY BODY T' FOLLOW THROUGH.
THERE HAS TO BE A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING.
STOP WORRYING ABOUT IT, SAM--DON'T THINK--JUST DO.
NOW OR NEVER, HUH?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
AIN'T WORRIED 'BOUT GETTIN' HURT--AH'M INVULNERABLE WHEN AH BLAST.
IT'S FAILURE AH CAN'T STAND.
I'M ESTABLING A NET. YOU CAN FALL WITHOUT FEAR.
BLEEP!
THANKS.
AH'M TH' OLDEST O' THE NEW MUTANTS. PROFESSOR XAVIER SAYS THE KIDS LOOK T' ME FOR LEADERSHIP-- T' SET AN EXAMPLE.
BUT EV'RYONE KEEPS GETTIN' BETTER AT USIN' THEIR POWERS, WHILE AH STAY PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
WHAT IF AH'M AS GOOD AS AH'M EVER GONNA GET-- AH'M NOT IMPROVIN' B'CAUSE AH CAN'T?!
YOU'LL BE FINE, SAM. TRUST ME.

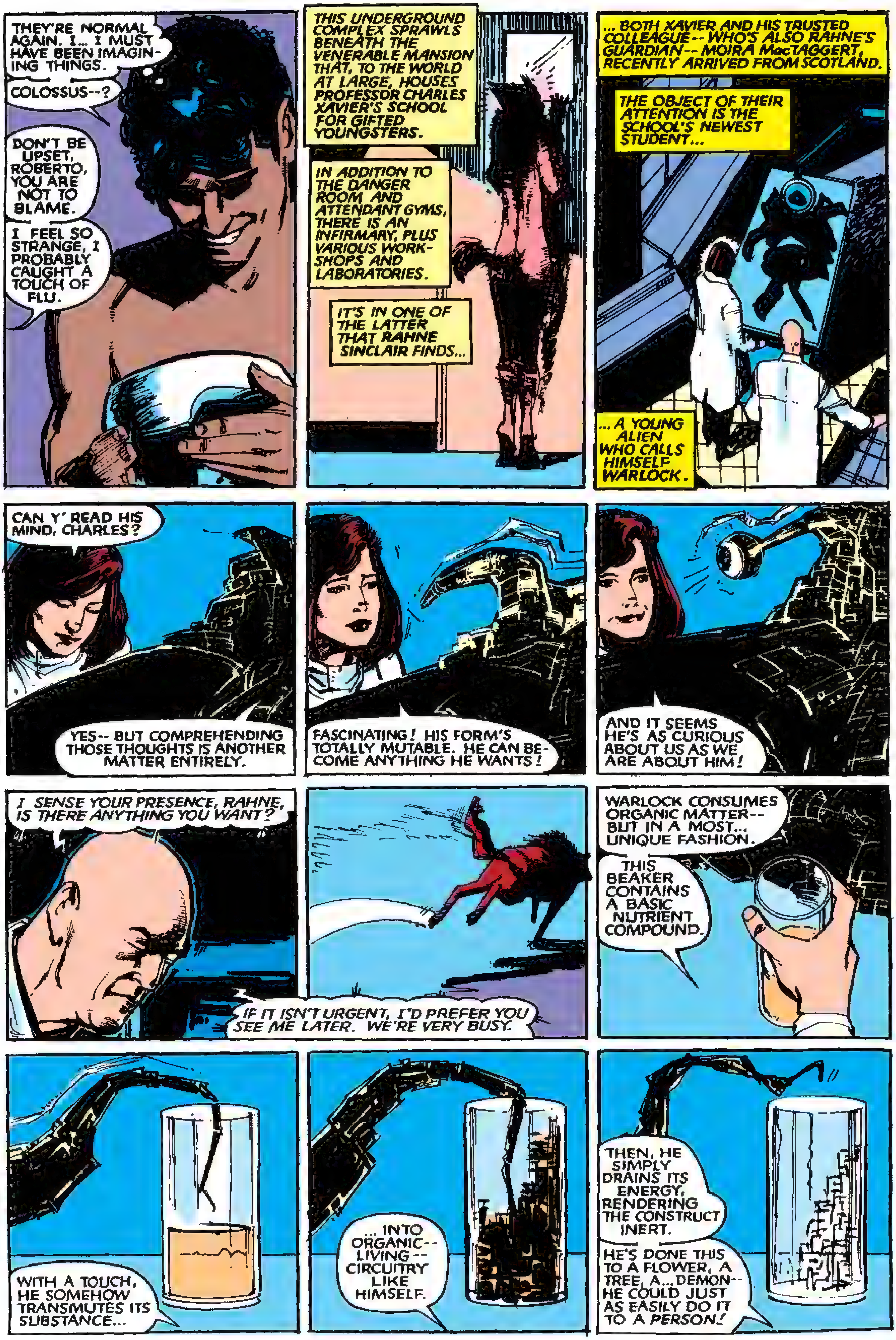

SAM!
HI, RAHNE!
JUST WHAT AH NEED, AN AUDIENCE.
I CAME T' WISH YOU LUCK!
LORD KNOWS AH COULD USE SOME.
OCH! I WISH IT WEREN'T THE DEMON TEACHING HIM. NIGHTCRAWLER FRIGHTENS ME SO. HOW CAN ANYTHING SO...EVIL LOOKING BE A FRIEND?
OKAY, FOLKS--
--HERE GOES NOTHIN'!
RAW FLAME SHEATHES SAM'S LOWER BODY--
--AN ONGOING BIOTHERMIC REACTION THAT PROPELS HIM INTO THE AIR LIKE HIS NAMESAKE...
... A RUNAWAY CANNONBALL, MAKING HIM CAPABLE OF SMASHING VIRTUALLY ANYTHING IN HIS PATH.
HIS BIG PROBLEM IS MANEUVERING. HE'S LEARNED TO MAKE SOFT LANDINGS...
...BUT TURNS-- ESPECIALLY THE SHARP, VIOLENT STUNTS REQUIRED IN A FIGHT--REMAIN BEYOND HIM.

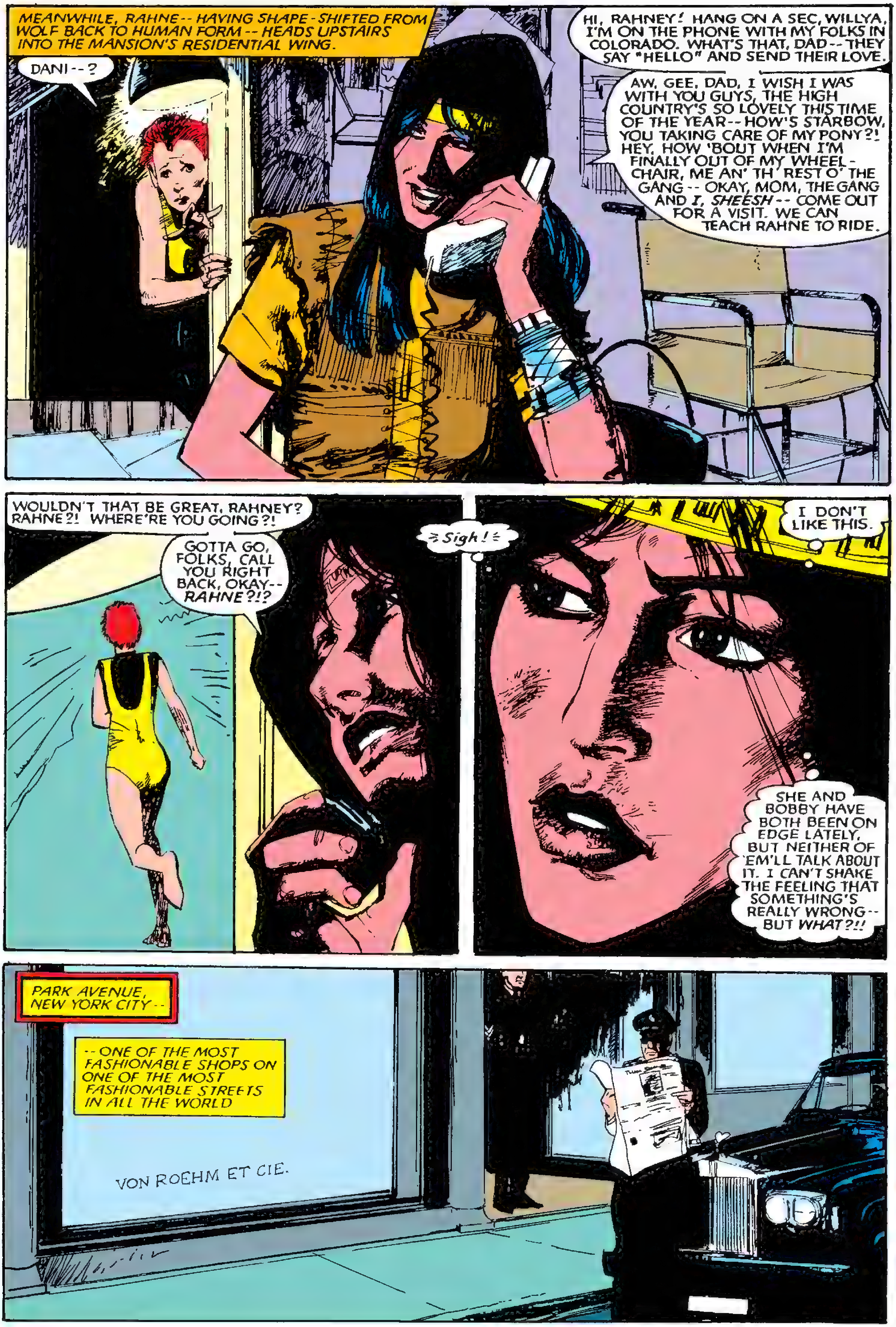

NOW FOR THE HAIRY PART.
AH CUT POWER -- KEEPIN' MOVIN' THROUGH MOMENTUM ALONE -- DO MY SOMERSAULT AN' TWIST LIKE NIGHTCRAWLER TAUGHT ME, AN' THEN LIGHT MY TORCH AN' BLAST OFF BACK THE WAY AH CAME.
PIECE O' CAKE.
SHOOT, IT AIN'T WORKIN', AH AIN'T ROLLIN' RIGHT!
HE LEFT IT TOO LONG, HE'S TOO CLOSE TO THE WALL AND AIMED THE WRONG WAY!
ONCE MORE, NIGHTCRAWLER TELEPORTS.
BAMF!
RELAX, SAM, I HAVE YOU.
AH BLEW IT, KURT!
SO?
DOWN YOU GO -- REMEMBER HOW TO FALL!
OF ALL THE LOUSY, DUMB, STUPID -- !!!
IF NIGHTCRAWLER HADN'T CAUGHT ME, AH'D'VE SPLATTERED MYSELF BUT GOOD -- OR, IF AH'D BLASTED, PROB'LY WRECKED THAT WALL AN' COST THE PROF MILLIONS O' BUCKS IN REPAIR BILLS.
AH'M S'PRISED AH DIDN'T BREAK MAH NECK WHEN AH LANDED.
MUST BE LOSIN' MY TOUCH.

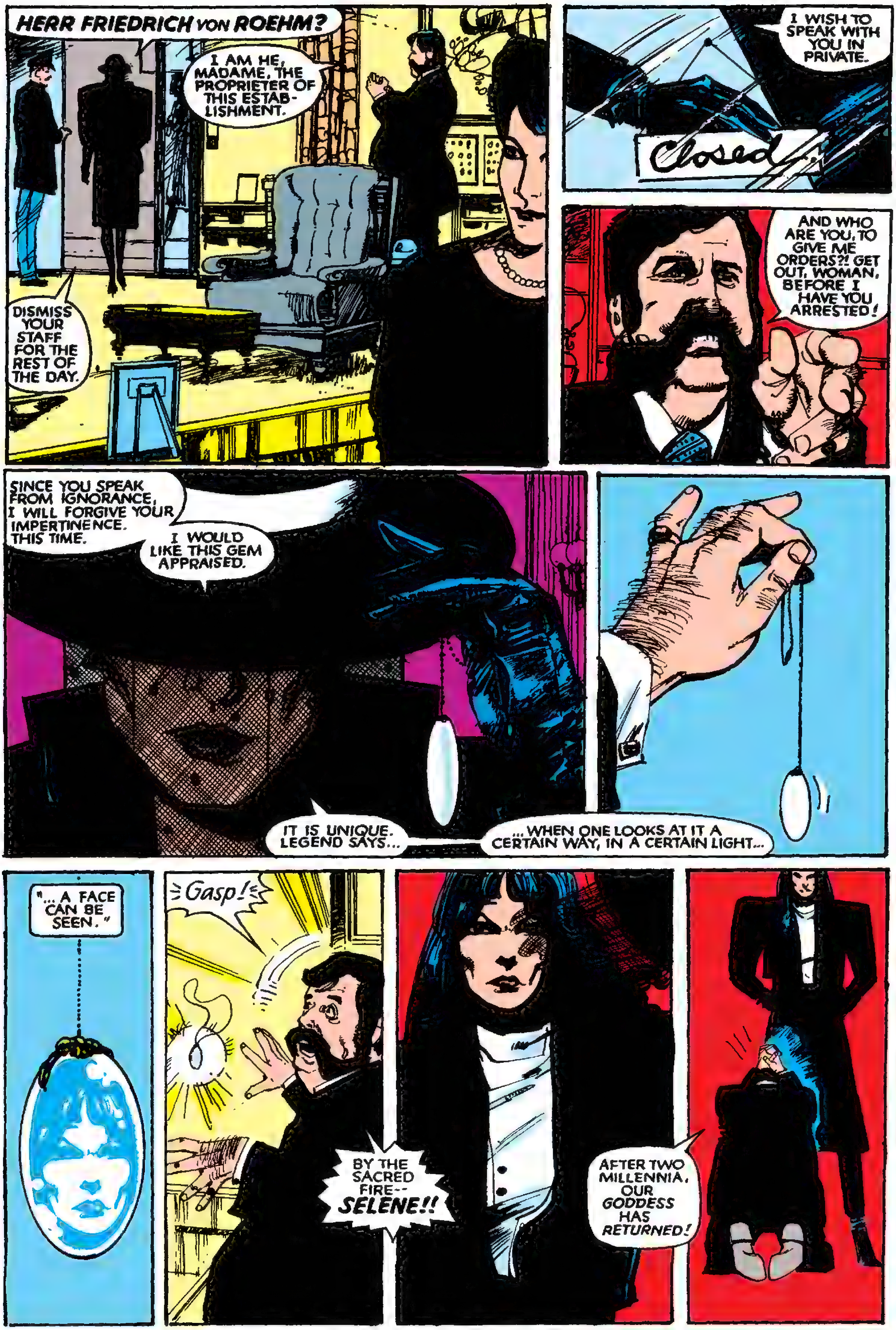

SORE?
NOTHIN'S BROKE.
I DIDN'T MEAN PHYSICALLY.
AH BLEW IT!
AS I DID, THE FIRST TIME I ATTEMPTED THAT MOVE!
NO KIDDIN'?
WHAT ELSE DID YOU EXPECT, PERFECTION RIGHT OFF THE BAT?!
YEAH, KIND'A.
NOTHING WORTH DOING COMES THAT EASY, HOTSHOT.
WE'LL START AGAIN. CLIMB UP THERE, I'LL JOIN YOU IN A MINUTE.
A DEVILISH GLEAM IN HIS EYES...
...NIGHTCRAWLER PLAYS WITH HIS PORTABLE COMMAND MODULE.
INSTANTLY, THE VAST CHAMBER TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO A CIRCUS TENT. SOME OF THE ELEMENTS ARE REAL.
OTHERS ARE ILLUSION -- HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS SO SOPHISTICATED THAT THEY'LL FOOL ANYONE.
M' CLOTHES--?!!
MAY I HAVE THIS WALTZ?
I... I'VE NEVER DANCED, I DINNA KNOW HOW.
THEN, MY DEAR...
...IT'S PAST TIME YOU LEARNED.
ENJOYING YOURSELF?
Oh, YES!
I'M GLAD.

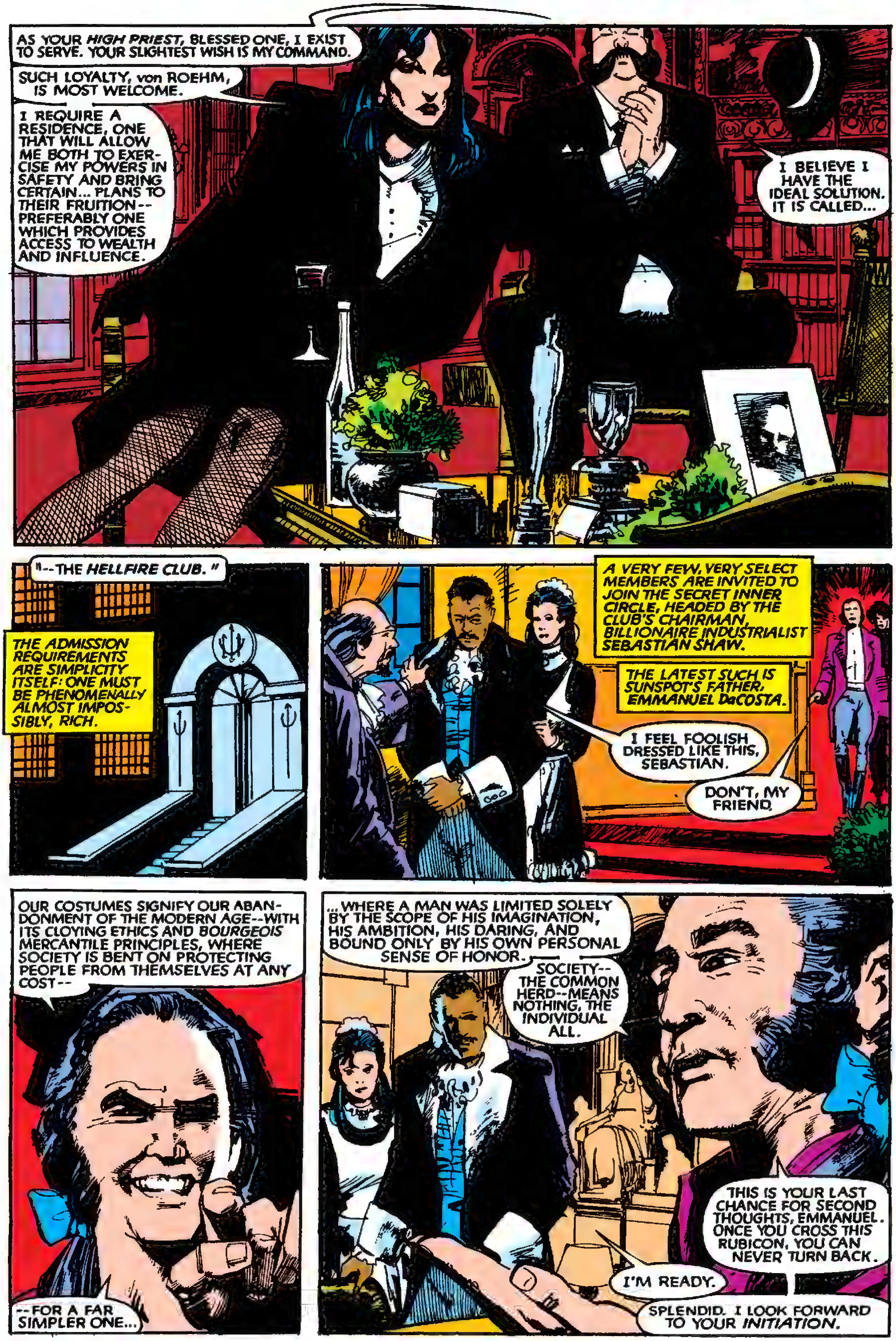

THIS WAS A REAL PLEASURE, RAHNE. BUT I MUST GO. SAM'S WAITING.
"SAM?!" BUT I THOUGHT-- AREN'T YOU--?!
DEMON! YOU TRICKED ME!!
I MEANT NO HARM. I MERELY WISHED TO SHOW THAT YOU SHOULD NEVER JUDGE BY APPEARANCES.
WHAT A PERSON, OR THING, LOOKS LIKE MEANS NOTHING...
...IT IS WHAT THEY ARE-- INSIDE, IN THEIR HEARTS AND SOULS --THAT MATTERS.
LIAR!
THA'S NA' TRUE, IT CANNA BE! IF YOU'RE NO' A DEMON, THEN ALL I'VE BEEN TAUGHT SINCE I WAS BORN -- P'RHAPS EVEN THE GOOD BOOK ITSELF -- IS FALSE!
RAHNE, WAIT!
DON'T RUN!!
"LET HER GO, SAM.
"LEAVE HER BE FOR NOW. THIS IS SOMETHING THE CHILD HAS TO WORK OUT FOR HERSELF."
AT THAT MOMENT, JUST DOWN THE HALL:
STRENGTH MEANS LITTLE, SUNSPOT, WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE TO UTILIZE IT PROPERLY. I LEARNED THAT THE HARD WAY.
SUCH SKILL IS ESPECIALLY VITAL FOR YOU. MY ARMORED BODY CAN SURVIVE CONSIDERABLE PUNISHMENT.
FOR ALL YOUR POWER, THOUGH, YOU ARE AS FRAGILE AS ANY NORMAL HUMAN.
POMPOUS GIANT, I KNOW THAT. BY HEAVEN, I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO FLATTEN YOU, COLOSSUS, TO SHOW I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

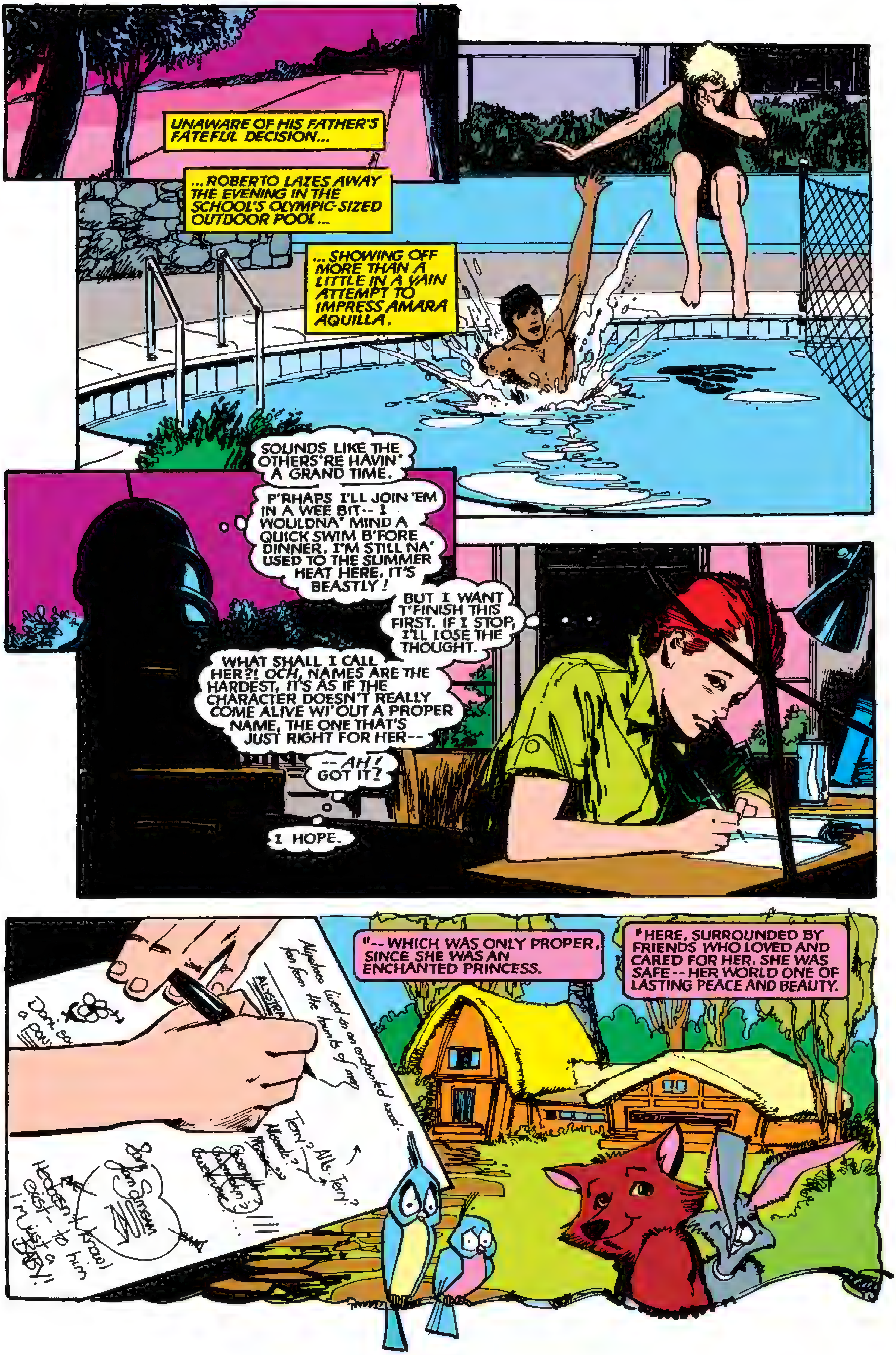
WHAT'S THAT--?!
RAHNE?!
PAY ATTENTION!
WHAP!
OWW!
IN COMBAT, A FOE WOULD NOT BE SO GENTLE.
COLOSSUS, THAT *HURT!*
NOBODY STRIKES A DaCOSTA, RUSSIAN--
--AND GETS AWAY WITH IT!
WHOUALLP!
I DON'T WANT TO PLAY WITH STICKS!
LET'S FIND OUT, ONCE AND FOR ALL, MAN TO MAN--
--WHICH OF US IS STRONGER!
IF YOU INSIST, LITTLE BOY. BUT YOU WILL FIND IT NO CONT--
AIEARRGH!
COLOSSUS, WHAT IS IT?! ARE YOU HURT?!! I DIDN'T MEAN--
--MADONNA, MY *HANDS!?!*

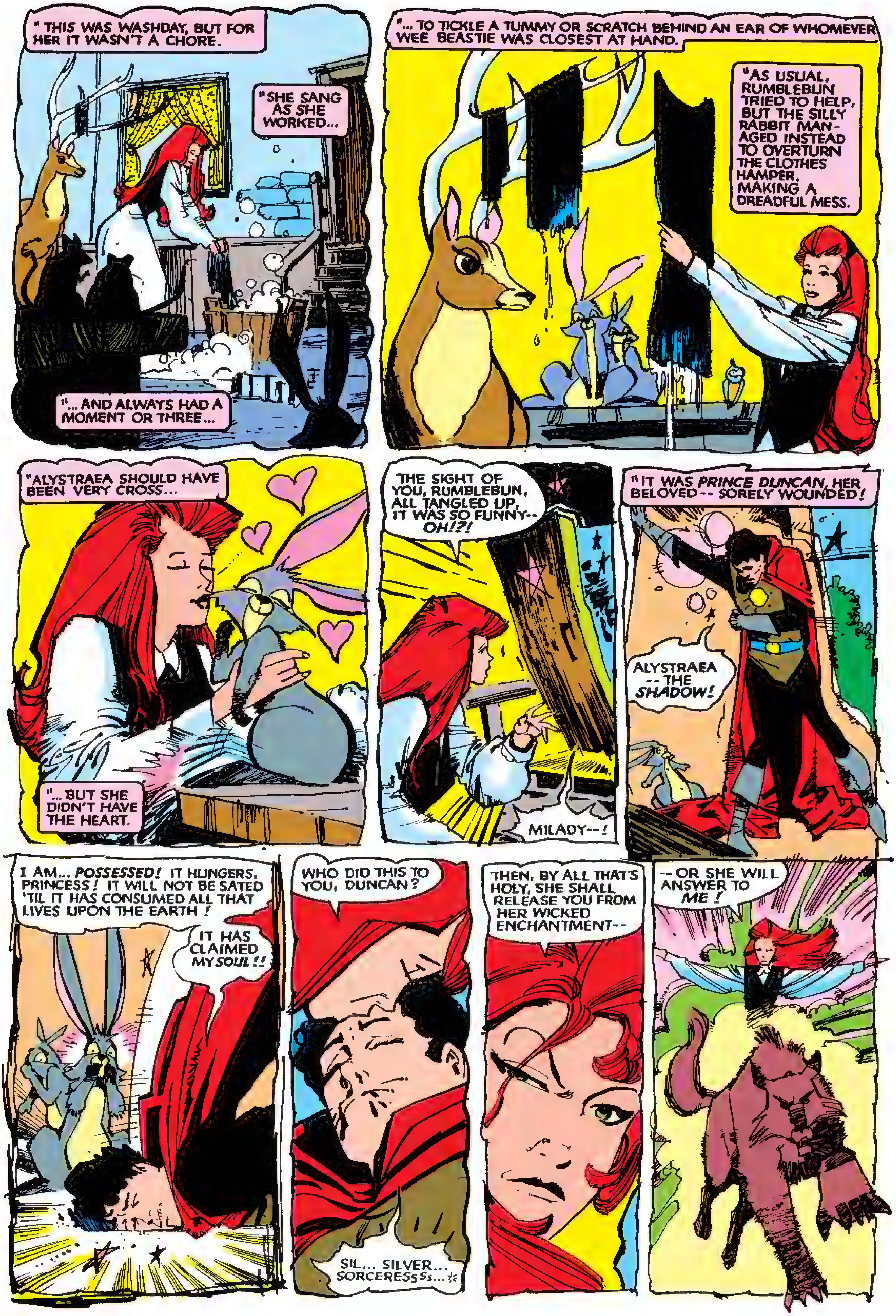

THEY'RE NORMAL AGAIN. I... I MUST HAVE BEEN IMAGINING THINGS.
COLOSSUS--?
DON'T BE UPSET, ROBERTO, YOU ARE NOT TO BLAME.
I FEEL SO STRANGE, I PROBABLY CAUGHT A TOUCH OF FLU.
THIS UNDERGROUND COMPLEX SPRAWLS BENEATH THE VENERABLE MANSION THAT, TO THE WORLD AT LARGE, HOUSES PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
IN ADDITION TO THE DANGER ROOM AND ATTENDANT GYMS, THERE IS AN INFIRMARY, PLUS VARIOUS WORKSHOPS AND LABORATORIES.
IT'S IN ONE OF THE LATTER THAT RAHNE SINCLAIR FINDS...
... BOTH XAVIER AND HIS TRUSTED COLLEAGUE -- WHO'S ALSO RAHNE'S GUARDIAN -- MOIRA MacTAGGERT, RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM SCOTLAND.
THE OBJECT OF THEIR ATTENTION IS THE SCHOOL'S NEWEST STUDENT...
... A YOUNG ALIEN WHO CALLS HIMSELF WARLOCK.
CAN Y' READ HIS MIND, CHARLES?
YES -- BUT COMPREHENDING THOSE THOUGHTS IS ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY.
FASCINATING! HIS FORM'S TOTALLY MUTABLE. HE CAN BECOME ANYTHING HE WANTS!
AND IT SEEMS HE'S AS CURIOUS ABOUT US AS WE ARE ABOUT HIM!
I SENSE YOUR PRESENCE, RAHNE, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT?
IF IT ISN'T URGENT, I'D PREFER YOU SEE ME LATER. WE'RE VERY BUSY.
WARLOCK CONSUMES ORGANIC MATTER -- BUT IN A MOST... UNIQUE FASHION.
THIS BEAKER CONTAINS A BASIC NUTRIENT COMPOUND.
WITH A TOUCH, HE SOMEHOW TRANSMUTES ITS SUBSTANCE...
... INTO ORGANIC -- LIVING -- CIRCUITRY LIKE HIMSELF.
THEN, HE SIMPLY DRAINS ITS ENERGY, RENDERING THE CONSTRUCT INERT.
HE'S DONE THIS TO A FLOWER, A TREE, A... DEMON -- HE COULD JUST AS EASILY DO IT TO A PERSON!

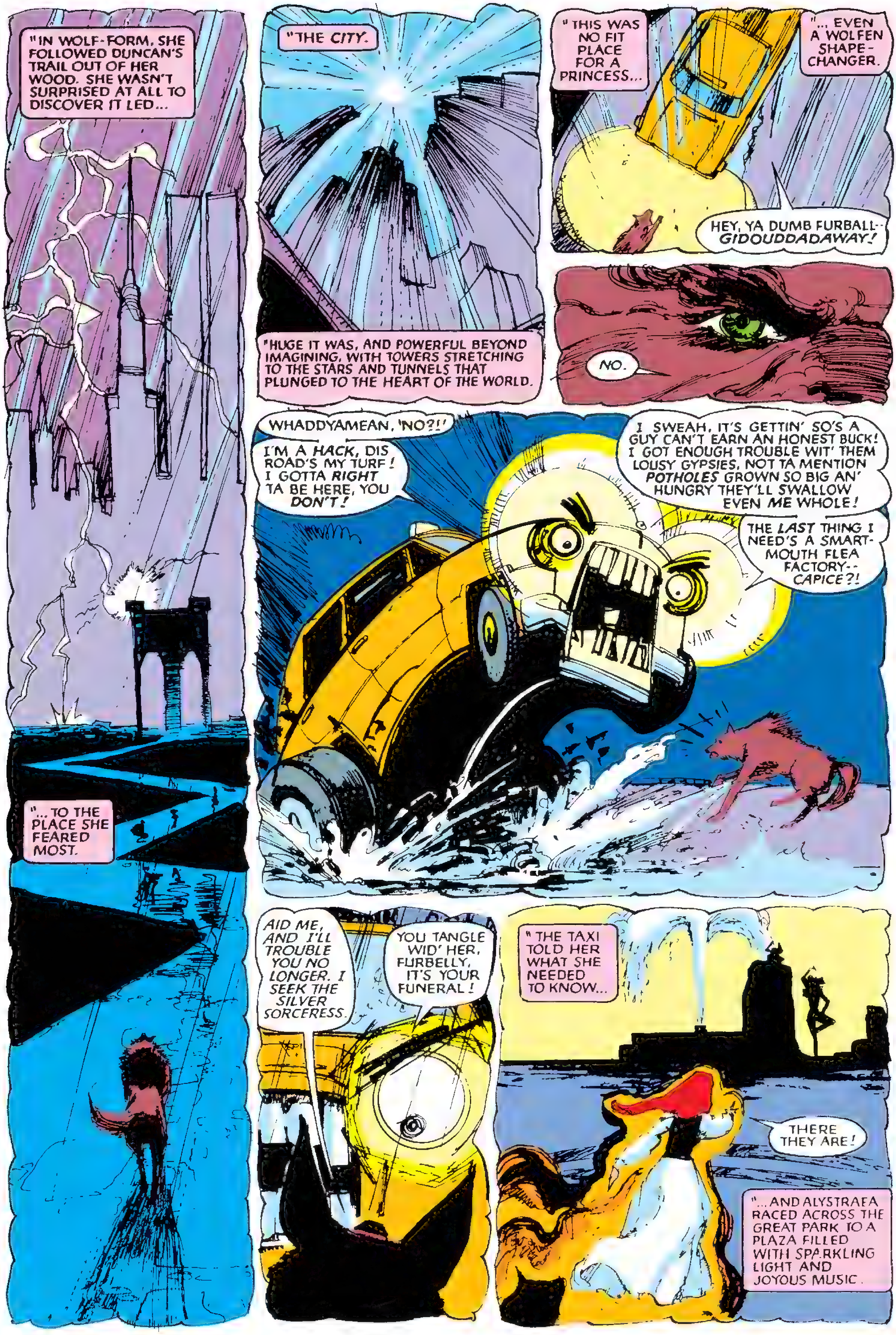

MEANWHILE, RAHNE -- HAVING SHAPE-SHIFTED FROM WOLF BACK TO HUMAN FORM -- HEADS UPSTAIRS INTO THE MANSION'S RESIDENTIAL WING.
DANI -- ?
HI, RAHNEY! HANG ON A SEC, WILLYA, I'M ON THE PHONE WITH MY FOLKS IN COLORADO. WHAT'S THAT, DAD -- THEY SAY "HELLO" AND SEND THEIR LOVE.
AW, GEE, DAD, I WISH I WAS WITH YOU GUYS, THE HIGH COUNTRY'S SO LOVELY THIS TIME OF THE YEAR -- HOW'S STARBOW, YOU TAKING CARE OF MY PONY?! HEY, HOW 'BOUT WHEN I'M FINALLY OUT OF MY WHEELCHAIR, ME AN' TH' REST O' THE GANG -- OKAY, MOM, THE GANG AND I, SHEESH -- COME OUT FOR A VISIT. WE CAN TEACH RAHNE TO RIDE.
WOULDN'T THAT BE GREAT, RAHNEY? RAHNE?! WHERE'RE YOU GOING?!
GOTTA GO, FOLKS, CALL YOU RIGHT BACK, OKAY -- RAHNE?!?
Sigh!
I DON'T LIKE THIS.
SHE AND BOBBY HAVE BOTH BEEN ON EDGE LATELY, BUT NEITHER OF 'EM'LL TALK ABOUT IT. I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S REALLY WRONG -- BUT WHAT?!!
PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY --
-- ONE OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE SHOPS ON ONE OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE STREETS IN ALL THE WORLD
VON ROEHM ET CIE.

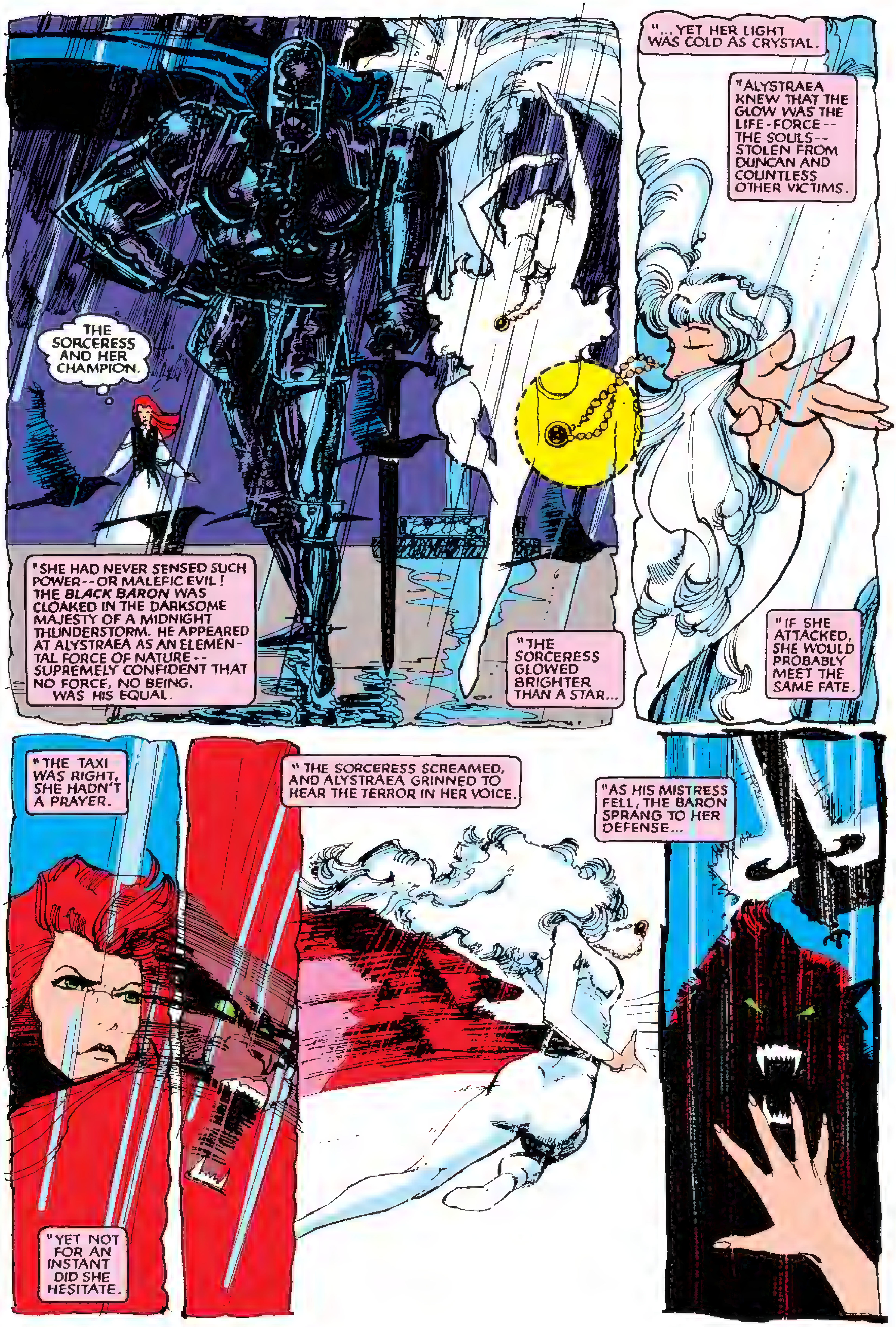

HERR FRIEDRICH VON ROEHM?
I AM HE, MADAME, THE PROPRIETER OF THIS ESTABLISHMENT.
DISMISS YOUR STAFF FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.
I WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN PRIVATE.
Closed
AND WHO ARE YOU, TO GIVE ME ORDERS?! GET OUT, WOMAN, BEFORE I HAVE YOU ARRESTED!
SINCE YOU SPEAK FROM IGNORANCE, I WILL FORGIVE YOUR IMPERTINENCE THIS TIME.
I WOULD LIKE THIS GEM APPRAISED.
IT IS UNIQUE. LEGEND SAYS...
...WHEN ONE LOOKS AT IT A CERTAIN WAY, IN A CERTAIN LIGHT...
"...A FACE CAN BE SEEN."
Gasp!
BY THE SACRED FIRE-- SELENE!!
AFTER TWO MILLENNIA, OUR GODDESS HAS RETURNED!


AS YOUR *HIGH PRIEST*, BLESSED ONE, I EXIST TO SERVE. YOUR SLIGHTEST WISH IS MY COMMAND.
SUCH LOYALTY, von ROEHM, IS MOST WELCOME.
I REQUIRE A RESIDENCE, ONE THAT WILL ALLOW ME BOTH TO EXERCISE MY POWERS IN SAFETY AND BRING CERTAIN... PLANS TO THEIR FRUITION -- PREFERABLY ONE WHICH PROVIDES ACCESS TO WEALTH AND INFLUENCE.
I BELIEVE I HAVE THE IDEAL SOLUTION. IT IS CALLED...
"--THE *HELLFIRE CLUB*."
*THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS ARE SIMPLICITY ITSELF: ONE MUST BE PHENOMENALLY ALMOST IMPOSSIBLY, RICH.*
*A VERY FEW, VERY SELECT MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE SECRET INNER CIRCLE, HEADED BY THE CLUB'S CHAIRMAN, BILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST SEBASTIAN SHAW.*
*THE LATEST SUCH IS SUNSPOT'S FATHER, EMMANUEL DaCOSTA.*
I FEEL FOOLISH DRESSED LIKE THIS, SEBASTIAN.
DON'T, MY FRIEND.
OUR COSTUMES SIGNIFY OUR ABANDONMENT OF THE MODERN AGE--WITH ITS CLOYING ETHICS AND *BOURGEOIS* MERCANTILE PRINCIPLES, WHERE SOCIETY IS BENT ON PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM THEMSELVES AT ANY COST--
--FOR A FAR SIMPLER ONE...
...WHERE A MAN WAS LIMITED SOLELY BY THE SCOPE OF HIS IMAGINATION, HIS AMBITION, HIS DARING, AND BOUND ONLY BY HIS OWN PERSONAL SENSE OF HONOR.
SOCIETY-- THE COMMON HERD--MEANS NOTHING, THE INDIVIDUAL ALL.
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE FOR SECOND THOUGHTS, EMMANUEL. ONCE YOU CROSS THIS RUBICON, YOU CAN NEVER TURN BACK.
I'M READY.
SPLENDID. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR *INITIATION*.

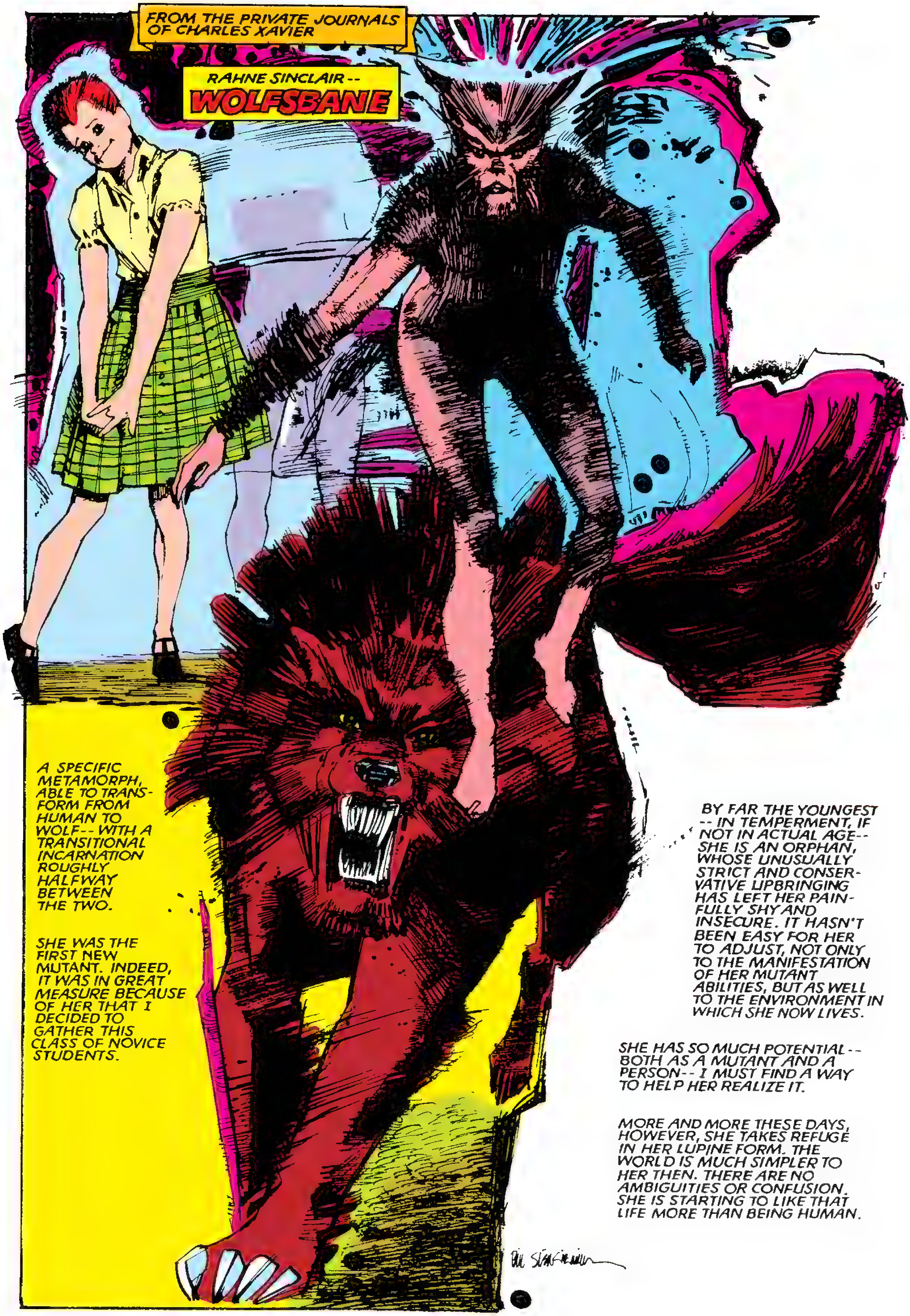

UNAWARE OF HIS FATHER'S FATEFUL DECISION...
...ROBERTO LAZES AWAY THE EVENING IN THE SCHOOL'S OLYMPIC-SIZED OUTDOOR POOL...
...SHOWING OFF MORE THAN A LITTLE IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO IMPRESS AMARA AQUILLA.
SOUNDS LIKE THE OTHERS'RE HAVIN' A GRAND TIME.
P'RHAPS I'LL JOIN 'EM IN A WEE BIT-- I WOULDNA' MIND A QUICK SWIM B'FORE DINNER. I'M STILL NA' USED TO THE SUMMER HEAT HERE. IT'S BEASTLY!
BUT I WANT T'FINISH THIS FIRST. IF I STOP, I'LL LOSE THE THOUGHT.
WHAT SHALL I CALL HER?! OCH, NAMES ARE THE HARDEST. IT'S AS IF THE CHARACTER DOESN'T REALLY COME ALIVE WI'OUT A PROPER NAME, THE ONE THAT'S JUST RIGHT FOR HER--
--AH! GOT IT!
I HOPE.
Alysthea lived in an enchanted wood. far from the haunts of men
ALYSTRA
Terry? Alls. Terry?
Alsande??
He doesn't know I exist - to him I'm just a BABY!
"--WHICH WAS ONLY PROPER, SINCE SHE WAS AN ENCHANTED PRINCESS.
"HERE, SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS WHO LOVED AND CARED FOR HER, SHE WAS SAFE -- HER WORLD ONE OF LASTING PEACE AND BEAUTY.


"THIS WAS WASHDAY, BUT FOR HER IT WASN'T A CHORE.
"SHE SANG AS SHE WORKED...
"...AND ALWAYS HAD A MOMENT OR THREE...
"...TO TICKLE A TUMMY OR SCRATCH BEHIND AN EAR OF WHOMEVER WEE BEASTIE WAS CLOSEST AT HAND.
"AS USUAL, RUMBLEBUN TRIED TO HELP, BUT THE SILLY RABBIT MANAGED INSTEAD TO OVERTURN THE CLOTHES HAMPER, MAKING A DREADFUL MESS.
"ALYSTRAEA SHOULD HAVE BEEN VERY CROSS...
"...BUT SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART.
THE SIGHT OF YOU, RUMBLEBUN, ALL TANGLED UP, IT WAS SO FUNNY-- *OH!?!*
MILADY--!
"IT WAS *PRINCE DUNCAN*, HER BELOVED -- SORELY WOUNDED!
ALYSTRAEA -- THE *SHADOW!*
I AM... *POSSESSED!* IT HUNGERS, PRINCESS! IT WILL NOT BE SATED 'TIL IT HAS CONSUMED ALL THAT LIVES UPON THE EARTH!
IT HAS CLAIMED MY *SOUL!!*
WHO DID THIS TO YOU, DUNCAN?
SIL... SILVER... SORCERESSSss...
THEN, BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, SHE SHALL RELEASE YOU FROM HER WICKED ENCHANTMENT--
--OR SHE WILL ANSWER TO *ME!*


"IN WOLF-FORM, SHE FOLLOWED DUNCAN'S TRAIL OUT OF HER WOOD. SHE WASN'T SURPRISED AT ALL TO DISCOVER IT LED...
"... TO THE PLACE SHE FEARED MOST.
"THE *CITY*.
"HUGE IT WAS, AND POWERFUL BEYOND IMAGINING, WITH TOWERS STRETCHING TO THE STARS AND TUNNELS THAT PLUNGED TO THE HEART OF THE WORLD.
"THIS WAS NO FIT PLACE FOR A PRINCESS...
"... EVEN A WOLFEN SHAPE-CHANGER.
HEY, YA DUMB FURBALL-- *GIDOUDDADAWAY!*
NO.
WHADDYAMEAN, 'NO?!'
I'M A *HACK*, DIS ROAD'S MY TURF! I GOTTA *RIGHT* TA BE HERE, YOU *DON'T!*
I SWEAH, IT'S GETTIN' SO'S A GUY CAN'T EARN AN HONEST BUCK! I GOT ENOUGH TROUBLE WIT' THEM LOUSY GYPSIES, NOT TA MENTION *POTHOLES* GROWN SO BIG AN' HUNGRY THEY'LL *SWALLOW* EVEN *ME* WHOLE!
THE *LAST* THING I NEED'S A SMART-MOUTH FLEA FACTORY-- *CAPICE?!*
*AID ME, AND I'LL TROUBLE YOU NO LONGER. I SEEK THE SILVER SORCERESS.*
YOU TANGLE WID' HER, FURBELLY, IT'S YOUR FUNERAL!
"THE TAXI TOLD HER WHAT SHE NEEDED TO KNOW...
THERE THEY ARE!
"... AND ALYSTRAEA RACED ACROSS THE GREAT PARK TO A PLAZA FILLED WITH SPARKLING LIGHT AND JOYOUS MUSIC.


THE SORCERESS AND HER CHAMPION.
"SHE HAD NEVER SENSED SUCH POWER--OR MALEFIC EVIL! THE *BLACK BARON* WAS CLOAKED IN THE DARKSOME MAJESTY OF A MIDNIGHT THUNDERSTORM. HE APPEARED AT ALYSTRAEA AS AN ELEMENTAL FORCE OF NATURE--SUPREMELY CONFIDENT THAT NO FORCE, NO BEING, WAS HIS EQUAL.
"THE SORCERESS GLOWED BRIGHTER THAN A STAR...
"...YET HER LIGHT WAS COLD AS CRYSTAL.
"ALYSTRAEA KNEW THAT THE GLOW WAS THE LIFE-FORCE--THE SOULS--STOLEN FROM DUNCAN AND COUNTLESS OTHER VICTIMS.
"IF SHE ATTACKED, SHE WOULD PROBABLY MEET THE SAME FATE.
"THE TAXI WAS RIGHT, SHE HADN'T A PRAYER.
"YET NOT FOR AN INSTANT DID SHE HESITATE.
"THE SORCERESS SCREAMED, AND ALYSTRAEA GRINNED TO HEAR THE TERROR IN HER VOICE.
"AS HIS MISTRESS FELL, THE BARON SPRANG TO HER DEFENSE...

"...ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT ALYSTRAEA HAD MAGICKS A'PLENTY OF HER OWN, AS SHE HURLED HIM AWAY.
BEHOLD YOUR DOOM, FIEND. NOT ALL YOUR SORCERY CAN SAVE YOU NOW.
MERCY, I BEG YOU!
AYE, I'LL GRANT THE SAME MERCY...
...YOU GAVE DUNCAN!
THE MANSION...
...LATER THAT NIGHT.
ALL IS CALM, DECEPTIVELY PEACEFUL...
... AS A STORY ENDS...
... AND A NIGHTMARE BEGINS.
NEXT SHADOWMAN


FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNALS OF CHARLES XAVIER
RAHNE SINCLAIR -- WOLFSBANE

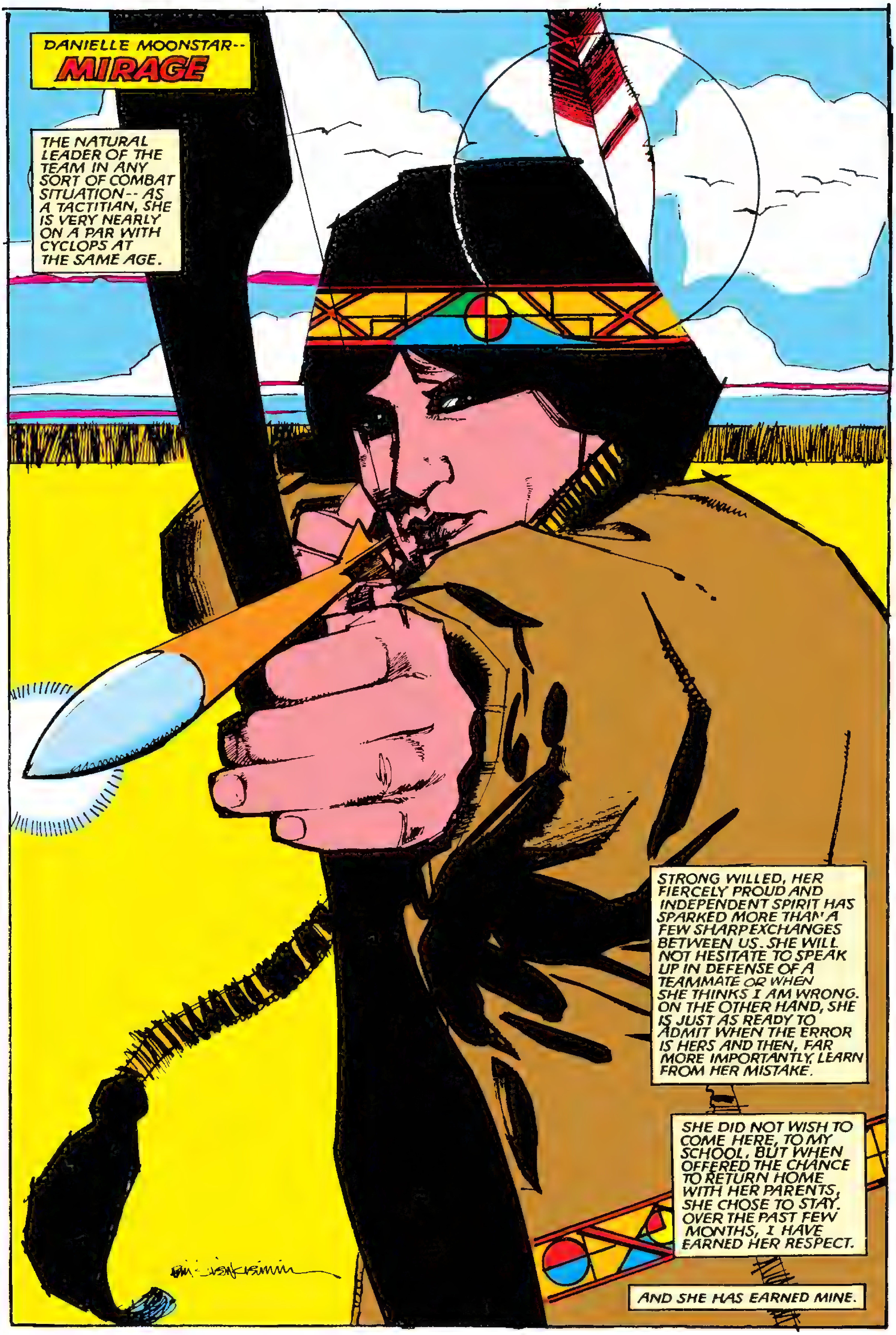
A SPECIFIC METAMORPH, ABLE TO TRANSFORM FROM HUMAN TO WOLF-- WITH A TRANSITIONAL INCARNATION ROUGHLY HALFWAY BETWEEN THE TWO.

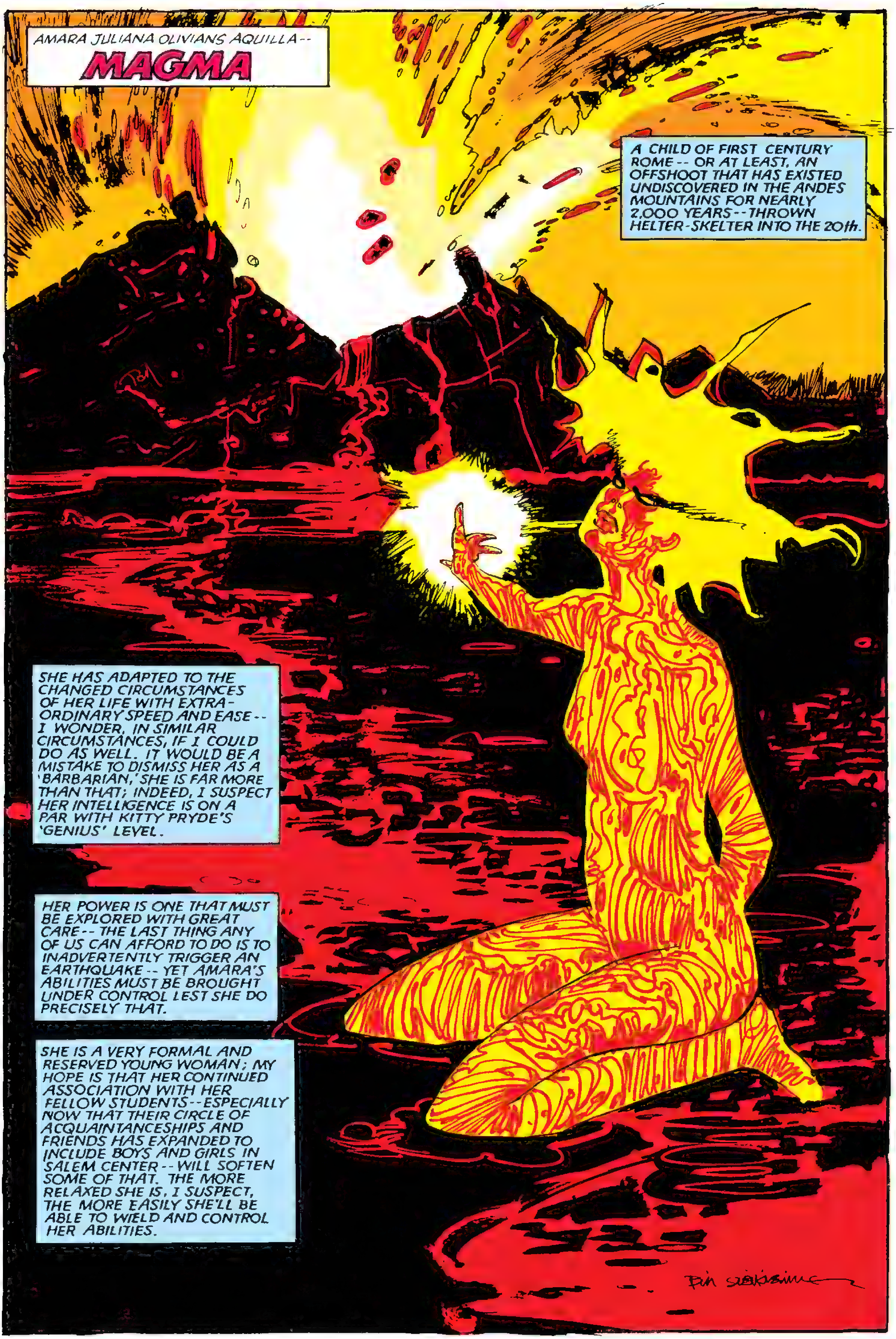
SHE WAS THE FIRST NEW MUTANT. INDEED, IT WAS IN GREAT MEASURE BECAUSE OF HER THAT I DECIDED TO GATHER THIS CLASS OF NOVICE STUDENTS.

BY FAR THE YOUNGEST -- IN TEMPERMENT, IF NOT IN ACTUAL AGE-- SHE IS AN ORPHAN, WHOSE UNUSUALLY STRICT AND CONSERVATIVE UPBRINGING HAS LEFT HER PAINFULLY SHY AND INSECURE. IT HASN'T BEEN EASY FOR HER TO ADJUST, NOT ONLY TO THE MANIFESTATION OF HER MUTANT ABILITIES, BUT AS WELL TO THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH SHE NOW LIVES.

SHE HAS SO MUCH POTENTIAL -- BOTH AS A MUTANT AND A PERSON-- I MUST FIND A WAY TO HELP HER REALIZE IT.

MORE AND MORE THESE DAYS, HOWEVER, SHE TAKES REFUGE IN HER LUPINE FORM. THE WORLD IS MUCH SIMPLER TO HER THEN. THERE ARE NO AMBIGUITIES OR CONFUSION. SHE IS STARTING TO LIKE THAT LIFE MORE THAN BEING HUMAN.


DANIELLE MOONSTAR-- MIRAGE
THE NATURAL LEADER OF THE TEAM IN ANY SORT OF COMBAT SITUATION-- AS A TACTITIAN, SHE IS VERY NEARLY ON A PAR WITH CYCLOPS AT THE SAME AGE.
STRONG WILLED, HER FIERCELY PROUD AND INDEPENDENT SPIRIT HAS SPARKED MORE THAN A FEW SHARP EXCHANGES BETWEEN US. SHE WILL NOT HESITATE TO SPEAK UP IN DEFENSE OF A TEAMMATE OR WHEN SHE THINKS I AM WRONG. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE IS JUST AS READY TO ADMIT WHEN THE ERROR IS HERS AND THEN, FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, LEARN FROM HER MISTAKE.
SHE DID NOT WISH TO COME HERE, TO MY SCHOOL, BUT WHEN OFFERED THE CHANCE TO RETURN HOME WITH HER PARENTS, SHE CHOSE TO STAY. OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, I HAVE EARNED HER RESPECT.
AND SHE HAS EARNED MINE.


AMARA JULIANA OLIVIANS AQUILLA--
MAGMA
A CHILD OF FIRST CENTURY ROME -- OR AT LEAST, AN OFFSHOOT THAT HAS EXISTED UNDISCOVERED IN THE ANDES MOUNTAINS FOR NEARLY 2,000 YEARS -- THROWN HELTER-SKELTER INTO THE 20th.
SHE HAS ADAPTED TO THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES OF HER LIFE WITH EXTRAORDINARY SPEED AND EASE -- I WONDER, IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES, IF I COULD DO AS WELL. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO DISMISS HER AS A 'BARBARIAN,' SHE IS FAR MORE THAN THAT; INDEED, I SUSPECT HER INTELLIGENCE IS ON A PAR WITH KITTY PRYDE'S 'GENIUS' LEVEL.
HER POWER IS ONE THAT MUST BE EXPLORED WITH GREAT CARE -- THE LAST THING ANY OF US CAN AFFORD TO DO IS TO INADVERTENTLY TRIGGER AN EARTHQUAKE -- YET AMARA'S ABILITIES MUST BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL LEST SHE DO PRECISELY THAT.
SHE IS A VERY FORMAL AND RESERVED YOUNG WOMAN; MY HOPE IS THAT HER CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH HER FELLOW STUDENTS -- ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THEIR CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCESHIPS AND FRIENDS HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE BOYS AND GIRLS IN SALEM CENTER -- WILL SOFTEN SOME OF THAT. THE MORE RELAXED SHE IS, I SUSPECT, THE MORE EASILY SHE'LL BE ABLE TO WIELD AND CONTROL HER ABILITIES.

MARVEL
THE NEW MUTANTS
23
JAN

STAN LEE
PRESENTS

# Shadowman

by CHRIS CLAREMONT, *writer* & BILL SIENKIEWICZ, *artist*
TOM ORZECHOWSKI, *letterer* • GLYNIS WEIN, *colorist*
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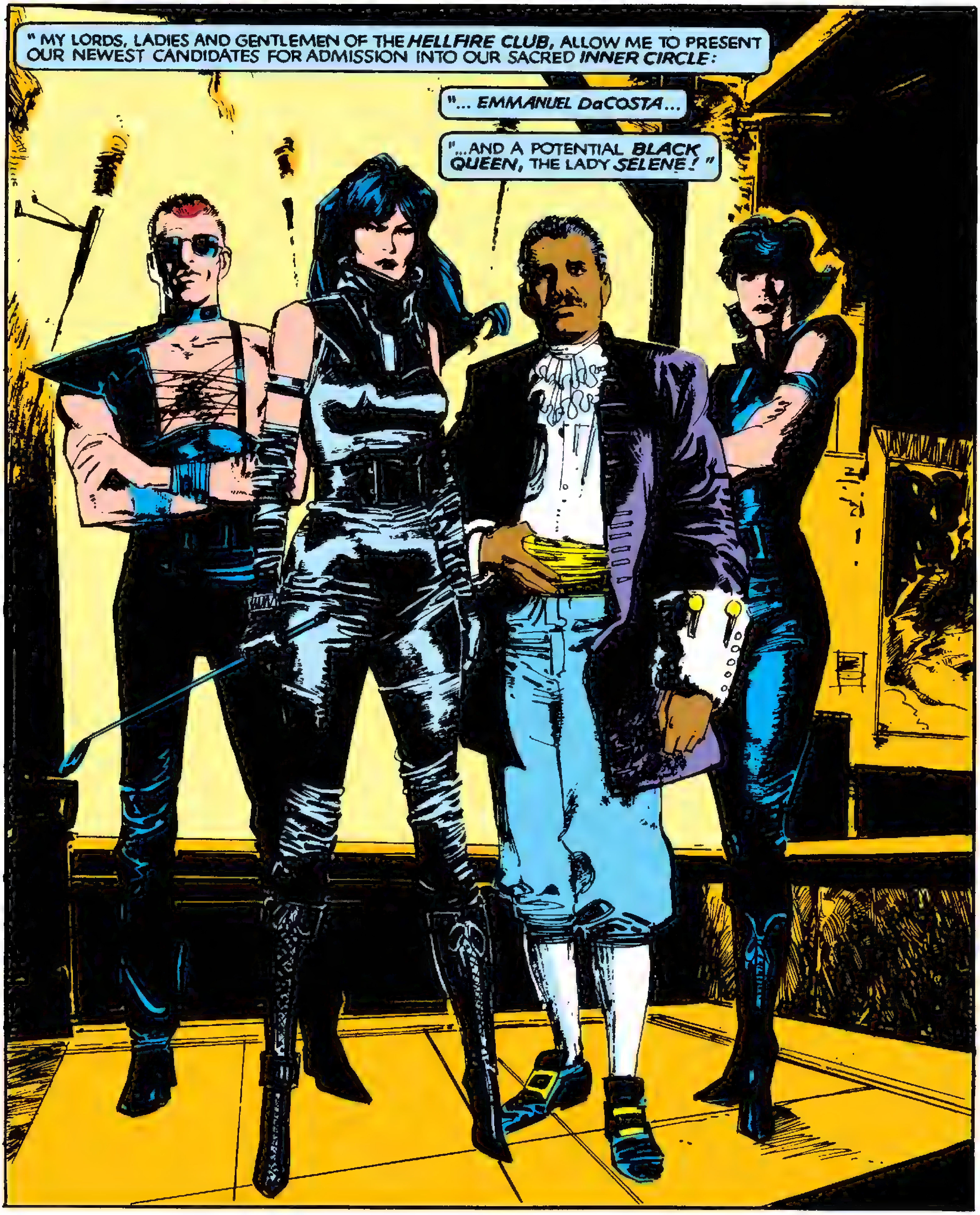
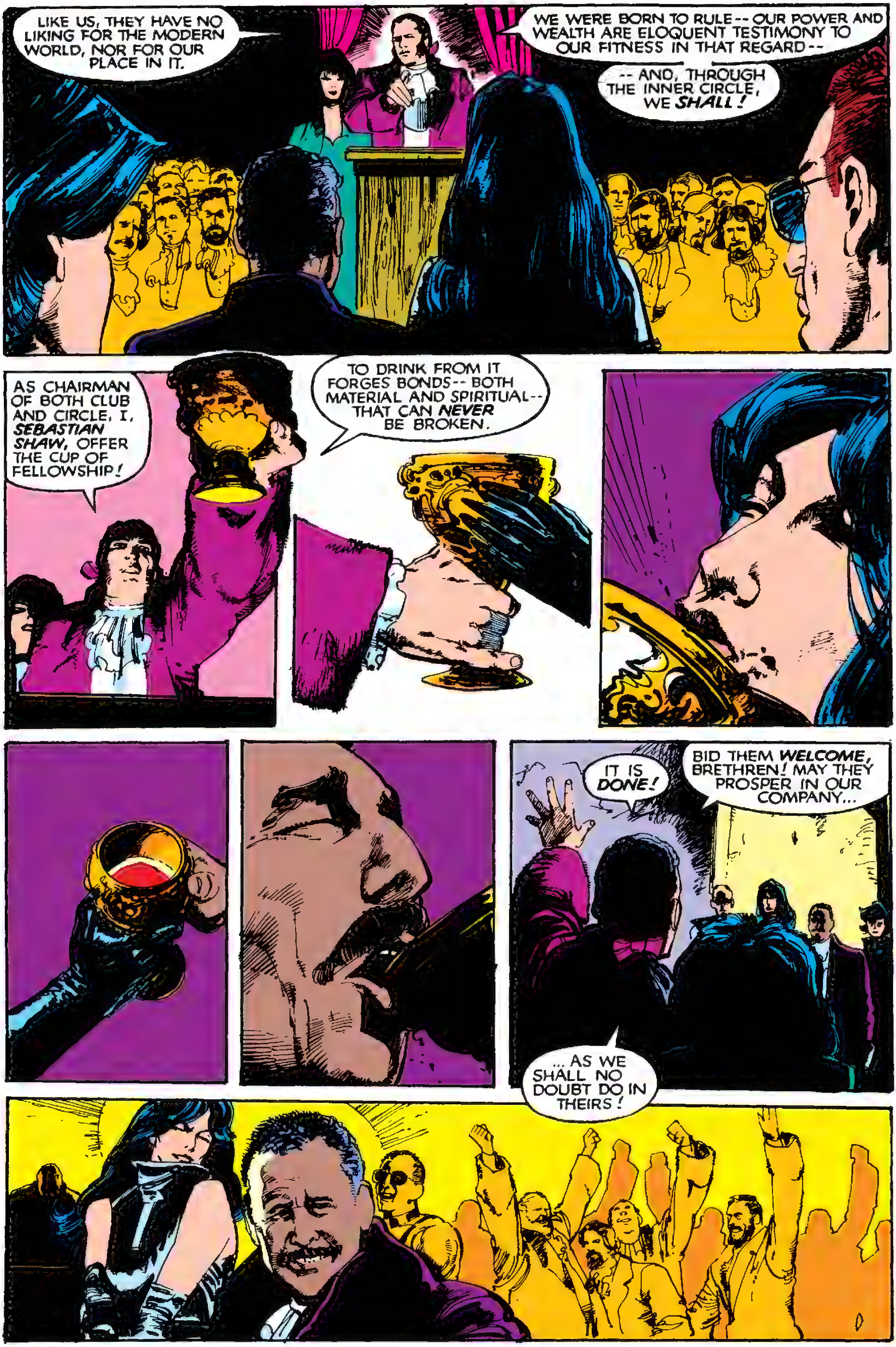
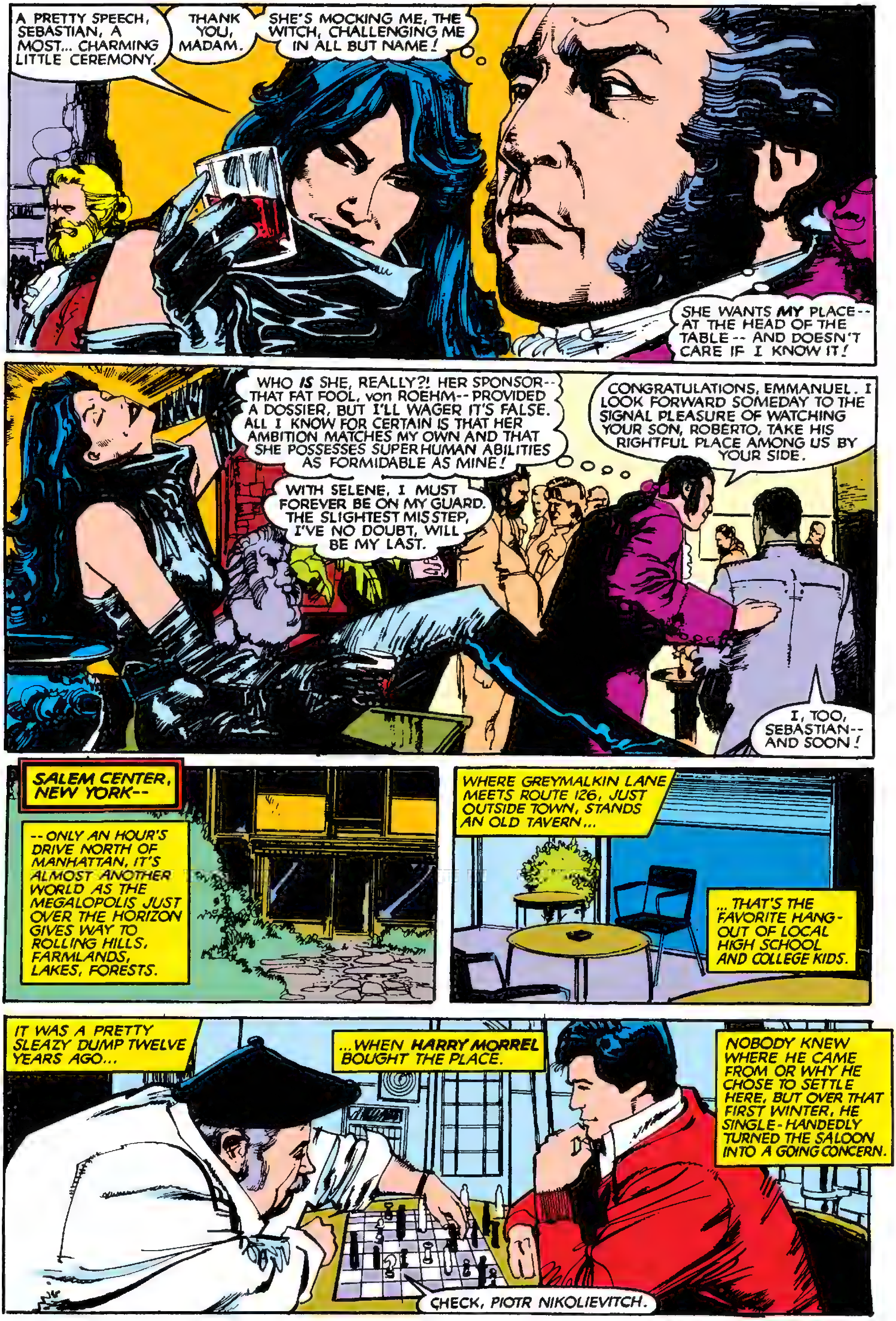
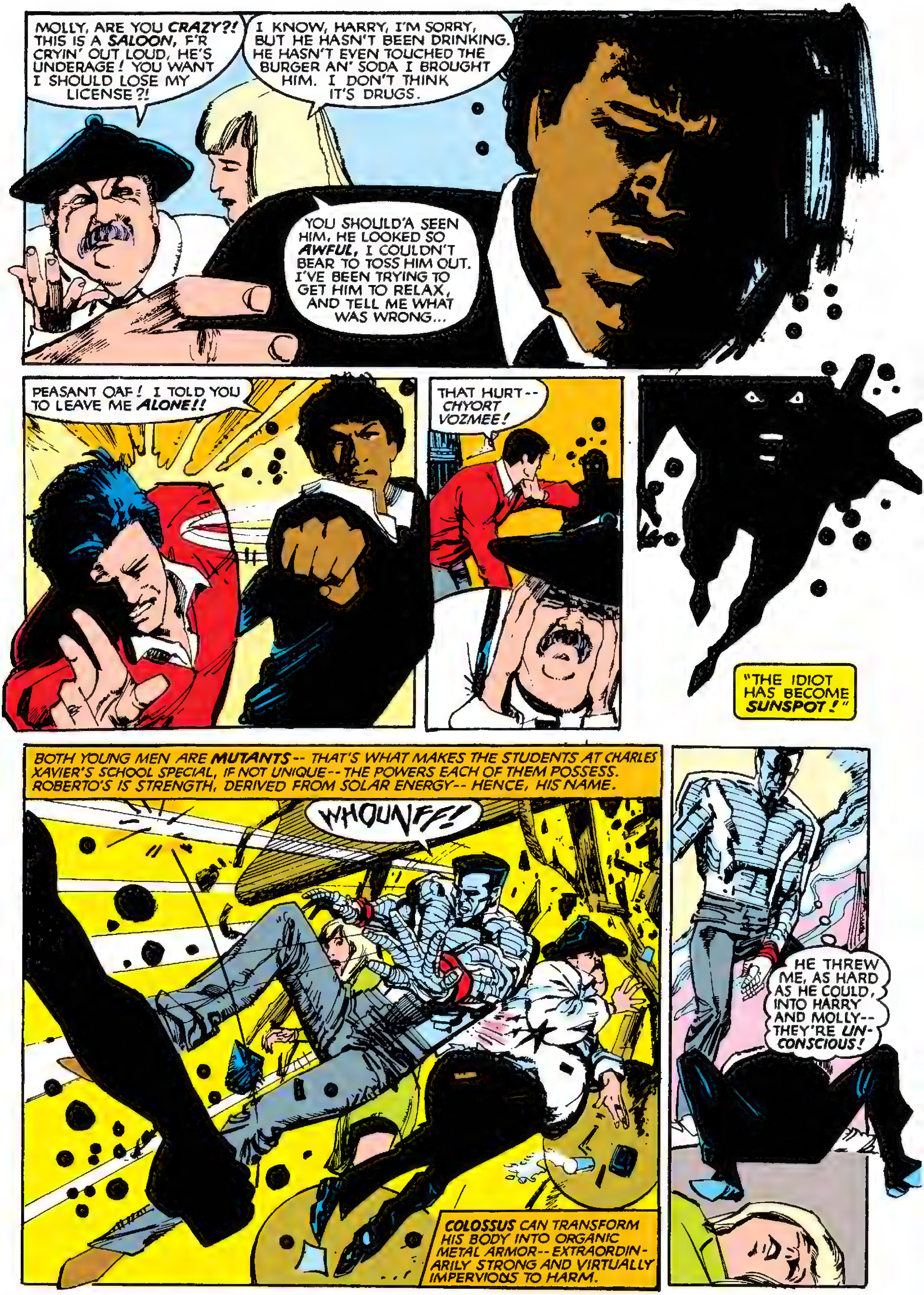
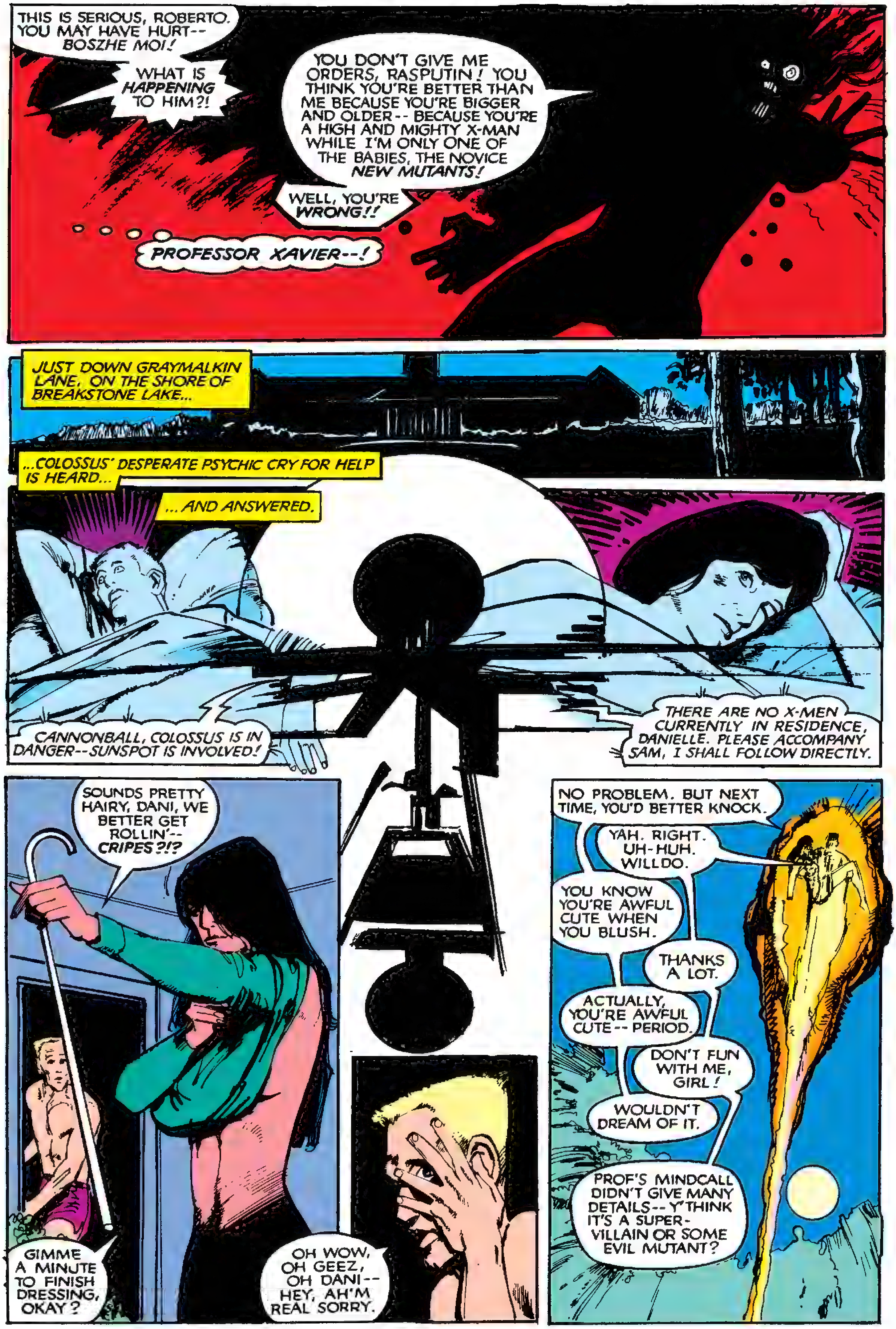

" MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE *HELLFIRE CLUB*, ALLOW ME TO PRESENT OUR NEWEST CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION INTO OUR SACRED *INNER CIRCLE*:
"... *EMMANUEL DaCOSTA*...
"...AND A POTENTIAL *BLACK QUEEN*, THE LADY *SELENE!* "

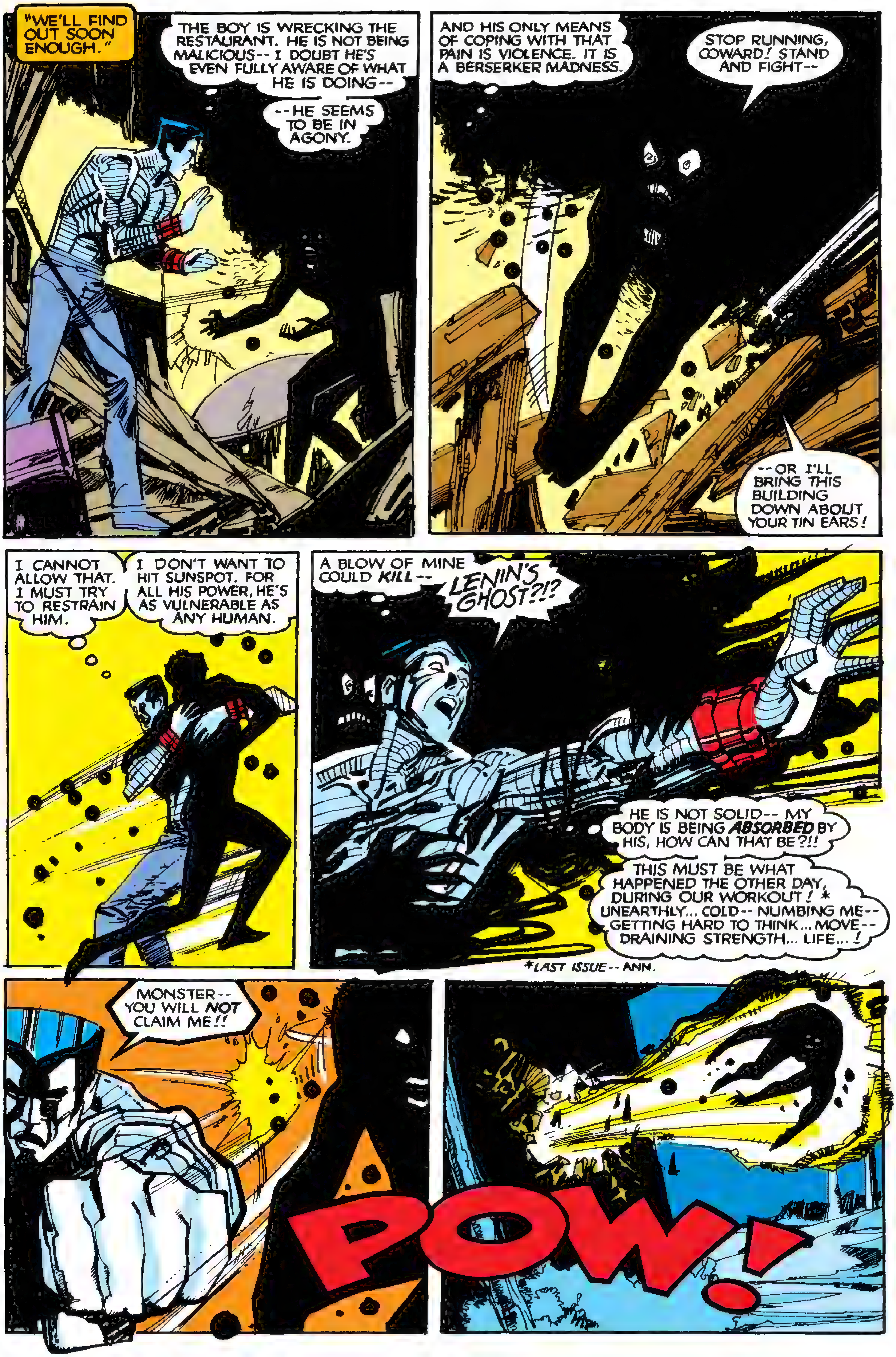

LIKE US, THEY HAVE NO LIKING FOR THE MODERN WORLD, NOR FOR OUR PLACE IN IT.
WE WERE BORN TO RULE -- OUR POWER AND WEALTH ARE ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO OUR FITNESS IN THAT REGARD --
-- AND, THROUGH THE INNER CIRCLE, WE *SHALL!*
AS CHAIRMAN OF BOTH CLUB AND CIRCLE, I, ***SEBASTIAN SHAW,*** OFFER THE CUP OF FELLOWSHIP!
TO DRINK FROM IT FORGES BONDS -- BOTH MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL -- THAT CAN ***NEVER*** BE BROKEN.
IT IS ***DONE!***
BID THEM ***WELCOME,*** BRETHREN! MAY THEY PROSPER IN OUR COMPANY...
... AS WE SHALL NO DOUBT DO IN THEIRS!

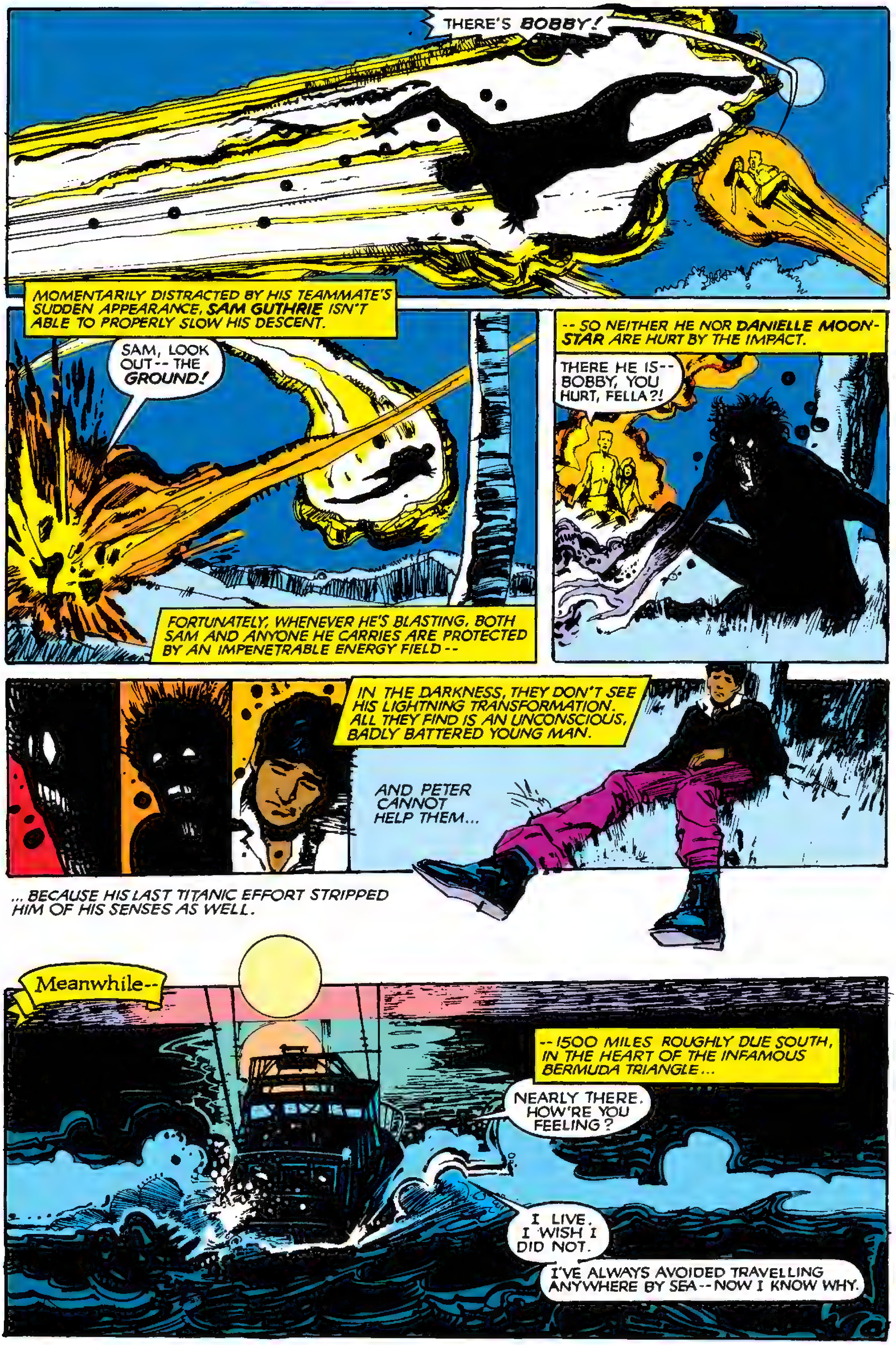

A PRETTY SPEECH, SEBASTIAN, A MOST... CHARMING LITTLE CEREMONY.
THANK YOU, MADAM.
SHE'S MOCKING ME, THE WITCH, CHALLENGING ME IN ALL BUT NAME!
SHE WANTS **MY** PLACE-- AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE -- AND DOESN'T CARE IF I KNOW IT!
WHO **IS** SHE, REALLY?! HER SPONSOR-- THAT FAT FOOL, von ROEHM-- PROVIDED A DOSSIER, BUT I'LL WAGER IT'S FALSE. ALL I KNOW FOR CERTAIN IS THAT HER AMBITION MATCHES MY OWN AND THAT SHE POSSESSES SUPERHUMAN ABILITIES AS FORMIDABLE AS MINE!
WITH SELENE, I MUST FOREVER BE ON MY GUARD. THE SLIGHTEST MISSTEP, I'VE NO DOUBT, WILL BE MY LAST.
CONGRATULATIONS, EMMANUEL. I LOOK FORWARD SOMEDAY TO THE SIGNAL PLEASURE OF WATCHING YOUR SON, ROBERTO, TAKE HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG US BY YOUR SIDE.
I, TOO, SEBASTIAN-- AND SOON!
SALEM CENTER, NEW YORK--
-- ONLY AN HOUR'S DRIVE NORTH OF MANHATTAN, IT'S ALMOST ANOTHER WORLD AS THE MEGALOPOLIS JUST OVER THE HORIZON GIVES WAY TO ROLLING HILLS, FARMLANDS, LAKES, FORESTS.
WHERE GREYMALKIN LANE MEETS ROUTE 126, JUST OUTSIDE TOWN, STANDS AN OLD TAVERN...
... THAT'S THE FAVORITE HANG-OUT OF LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE KIDS.
IT WAS A PRETTY SLEAZY DUMP TWELVE YEARS AGO...
...WHEN **HARRY MORREL** BOUGHT THE PLACE.
NOBODY KNEW WHERE HE CAME FROM OR WHY HE CHOSE TO SETTLE HERE, BUT OVER THAT FIRST WINTER, HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY TURNED THE SALOON INTO A GOING CONCERN.
CHECK, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH.

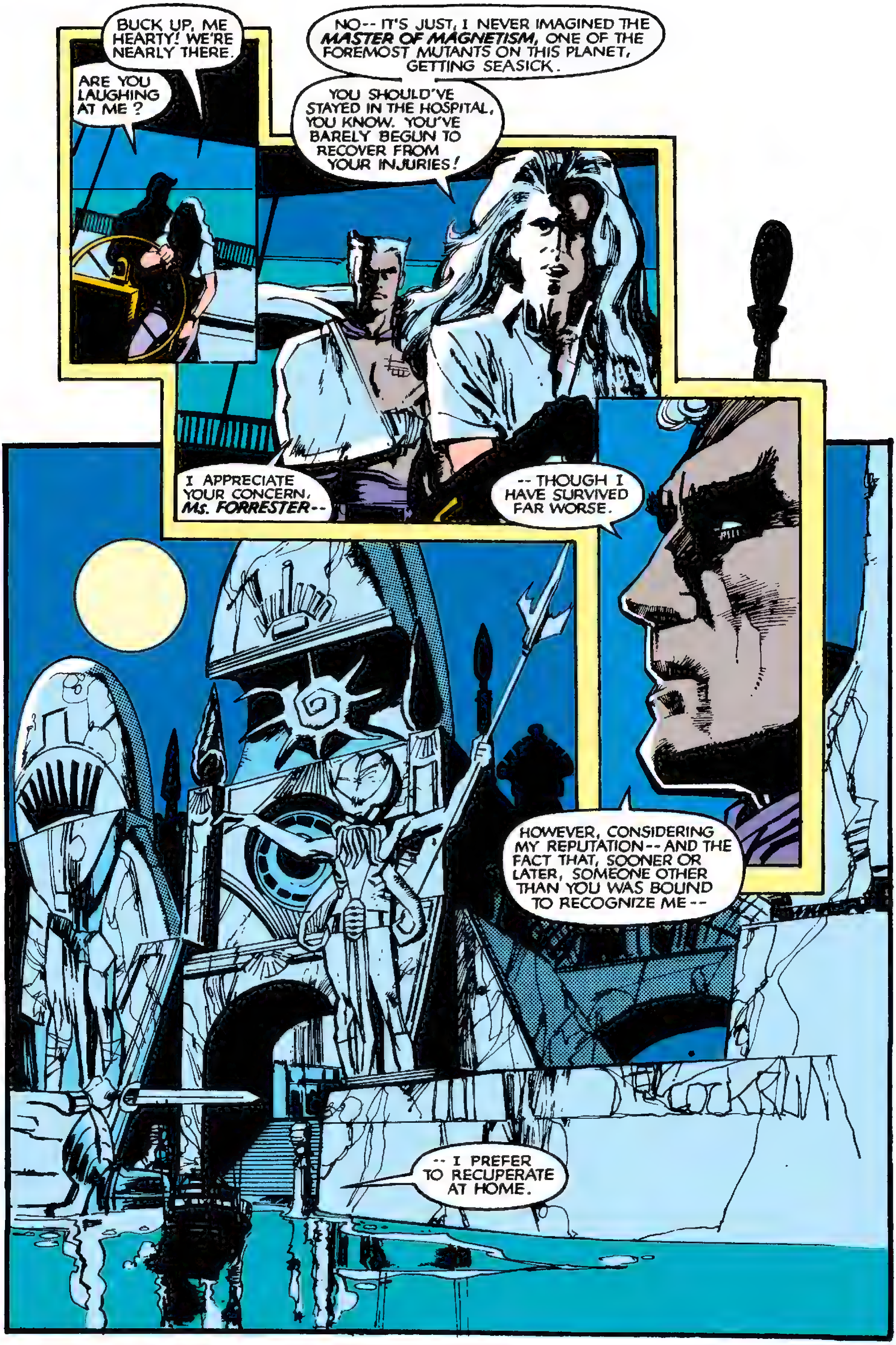
WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING, HARRY, THAT YOU SPEAK MY NATIVE LANGUAGE BETTER THAN I?
WE BEEN PLAYIN'--AN' YOU BEEN LOSIN'--SO LONG, *TOVARISCH*, STANDS T' REASON I'D PICK UP THE OCCASIONAL WORD OR PHRASE.
WANNA HEAR ME SWEAR IN YIDDISH?!
CHECKMATE, HARRY.
*OY VEY IS MIER!?!*
RASPUTIN, YOU SLY DOG--! SET UP THE BOARD, I WANT A REMATCH!
HARRY?
YAH, MOLLY, WHAT'S UP?
WE MAYBE GOT A PROBLEM IN THE NEXT ROOM. I WAS KIND'A HOPING PETER COULD HELP OUT.
I WILL BE GLAD TO, MOLLY, BUT WHY ME?
IT'S ONE OF YOUR CLASSMATES FROM XAVIER'S, PETER-- ***BOBBY DaCOSTA!***
HE CAME IN A COUPLE HOURS AGO. HE WON'T TALK OR ANYTHING, HE JUST SITS THERE!
WE'RE CLOSING FOR THE NIGHT. I FIGURED YOU'D MAKE SURE HE GETS BACK TO THE SCHOOL SAFE 'N' SOUND.
ROBERTO, IT'S PETER RASPUTIN.
G'WAY. LEAVE ME ALONE!

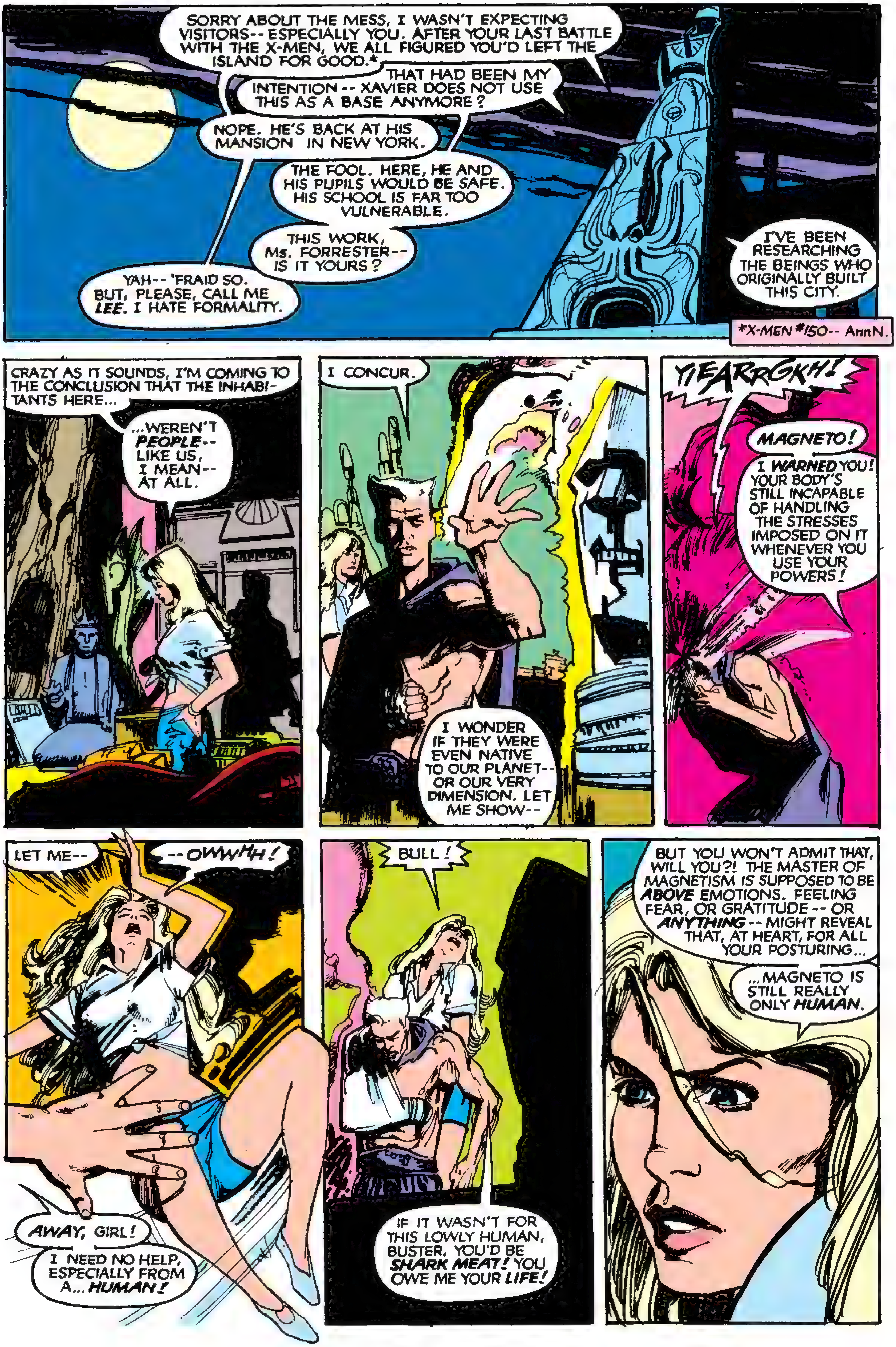

MOLLY, ARE YOU CRAZY?! THIS IS A SALOON, F'R CRYIN' OUT LOUD, HE'S UNDERAGE! YOU WANT I SHOULD LOSE MY LICENSE?!
I KNOW, HARRY, I'M SORRY, BUT HE HASN'T BEEN DRINKING. HE HASN'T EVEN TOUCHED THE BURGER AN' SODA I BROUGHT HIM. I DON'T THINK IT'S DRUGS.
YOU SHOULD'A SEEN HIM, HE LOOKED SO AWFUL, I COULDN'T BEAR TO TOSS HIM OUT. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET HIM TO RELAX, AND TELL ME WHAT WAS WRONG...
PEASANT OAF! I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE ME ALONE!!
THAT HURT-- CHYORT VOZMEE!
"THE IDIOT HAS BECOME SUNSPOT!"
BOTH YOUNG MEN ARE MUTANTS-- THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE STUDENTS AT CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL SPECIAL, IF NOT UNIQUE-- THE POWERS EACH OF THEM POSSESS. ROBERTO'S IS STRENGTH, DERIVED FROM SOLAR ENERGY-- HENCE, HIS NAME.
WHOUNFF!
COLOSSUS CAN TRANSFORM HIS BODY INTO ORGANIC METAL ARMOR-- EXTRAORDINARILY STRONG AND VIRTUALLY IMPERVIOUS TO HARM.
HE THREW ME, AS HARD AS HE COULD, INTO HARRY AND MOLLY-- THEY'RE UNCONSCIOUS!

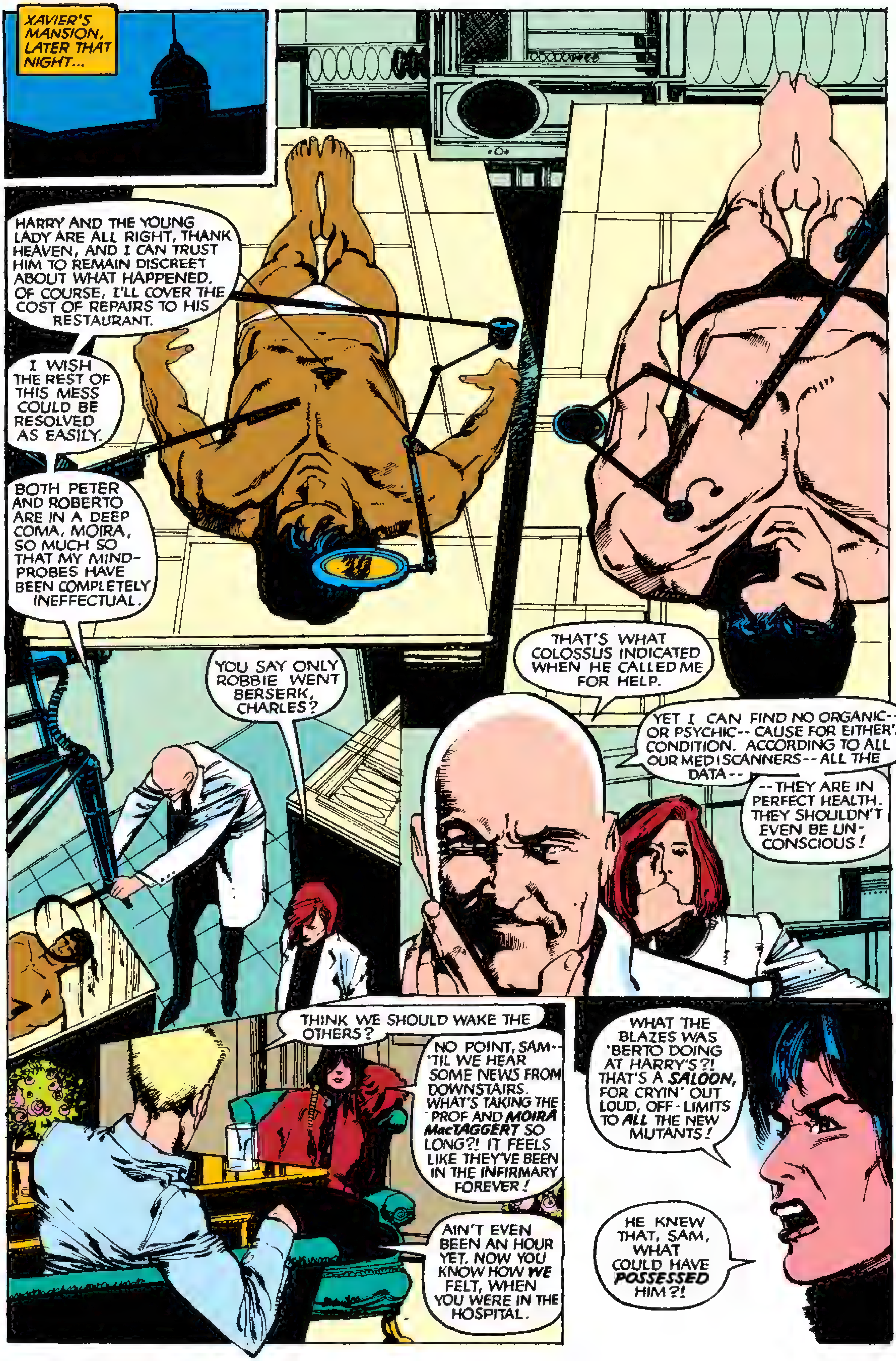

THIS IS SERIOUS, ROBERTO. YOU MAY HAVE HURT-- *BOSZHE MOI!*
WHAT IS *HAPPENING* TO HIM?!
YOU DON'T GIVE ME ORDERS, RASPUTIN! YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME BECAUSE YOU'RE BIGGER AND OLDER-- BECAUSE YOU'RE A HIGH AND MIGHTY X-MAN WHILE I'M ONLY ONE OF THE BABIES, THE NOVICE *NEW MUTANTS!*
WELL, YOU'RE *WRONG!!*
*PROFESSOR XAVIER--!*
*JUST DOWN GRAYMALKIN LANE, ON THE SHORE OF BREAKSTONE LAKE...*
*...COLOSSUS' DESPERATE PSYCHIC CRY FOR HELP IS HEARD...*
*...AND ANSWERED.*
*CANNONBALL, COLOSSUS IS IN DANGER--SUNSPOT IS INVOLVED!*
*THERE ARE NO X-MEN CURRENTLY IN RESIDENCE, DANIELLE. PLEASE ACCOMPANY SAM, I SHALL FOLLOW DIRECTLY.*
SOUNDS PRETTY HAIRY, DANI, WE BETTER GET ROLLIN'-- *CRIPES?!?*
GIMME A MINUTE TO FINISH DRESSING, OKAY?
OH WOW, OH GEEZ, OH DANI-- HEY, AH'M REAL SORRY.
NO PROBLEM. BUT NEXT TIME, YOU'D BETTER KNOCK.
YAH. RIGHT. UH-HUH. WILLDO.
YOU KNOW YOU'RE AWFUL CUTE WHEN YOU BLUSH.
THANKS A LOT.
ACTUALLY, YOU'RE AWFUL CUTE -- PERIOD.
DON'T FUN WITH ME, GIRL!
WOULDN'T DREAM OF IT.
PROF'S MINDCALL DIDN'T GIVE MANY DETAILS-- Y'THINK IT'S A SUPER-VILLAIN OR SOME EVIL MUTANT?

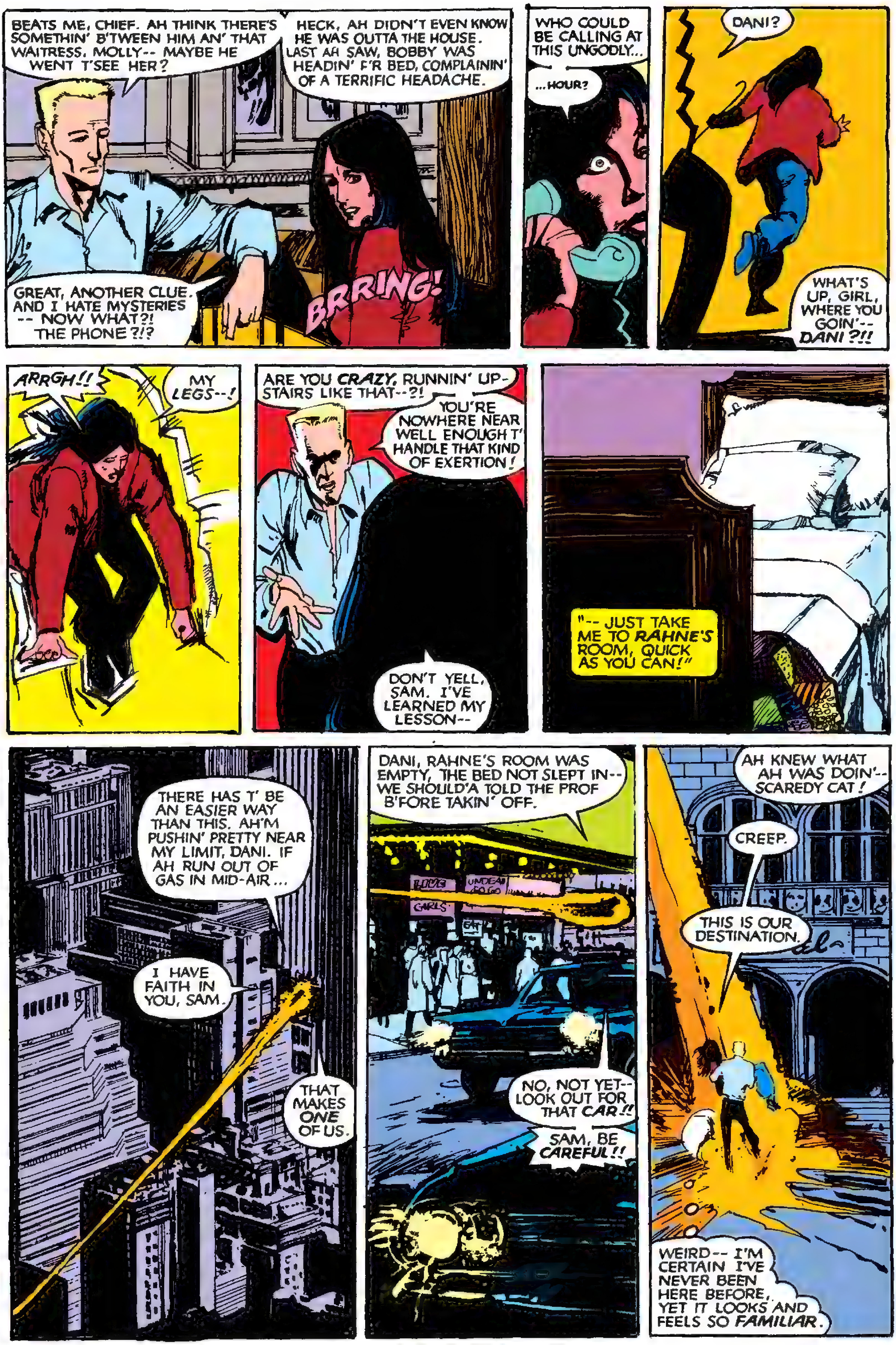

"WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH."
THE BOY IS WRECKING THE RESTAURANT. HE IS NOT BEING MALICIOUS-- I DOUBT HE'S EVEN FULLY AWARE OF WHAT HE IS DOING--
--HE SEEMS TO BE IN AGONY.
AND HIS ONLY MEANS OF COPING WITH THAT PAIN IS VIOLENCE. IT IS A BERSERKER MADNESS.
STOP RUNNING, COWARD! STAND AND FIGHT--
--OR I'LL BRING THIS BUILDING DOWN ABOUT YOUR TIN EARS!
I CANNOT ALLOW THAT. I MUST TRY TO RESTRAIN HIM.
I DON'T WANT TO HIT SUNSPOT. FOR ALL HIS POWER, HE'S AS VULNERABLE AS ANY HUMAN.
A BLOW OF MINE COULD *KILL*--
LENIN'S GHOST?!?
HE IS NOT SOLID-- MY BODY IS BEING *ABSORBED* BY HIS, HOW CAN THAT BE?!!
THIS MUST BE WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY, DURING OUR WORKOUT! * UNEARTHLY... COLD-- NUMBING ME-- GETTING HARD TO THINK... MOVE-- DRAINING STRENGTH... LIFE...!
*LAST ISSUE--ANN.
MONSTER-- YOU WILL *NOT* CLAIM ME!!
POW!

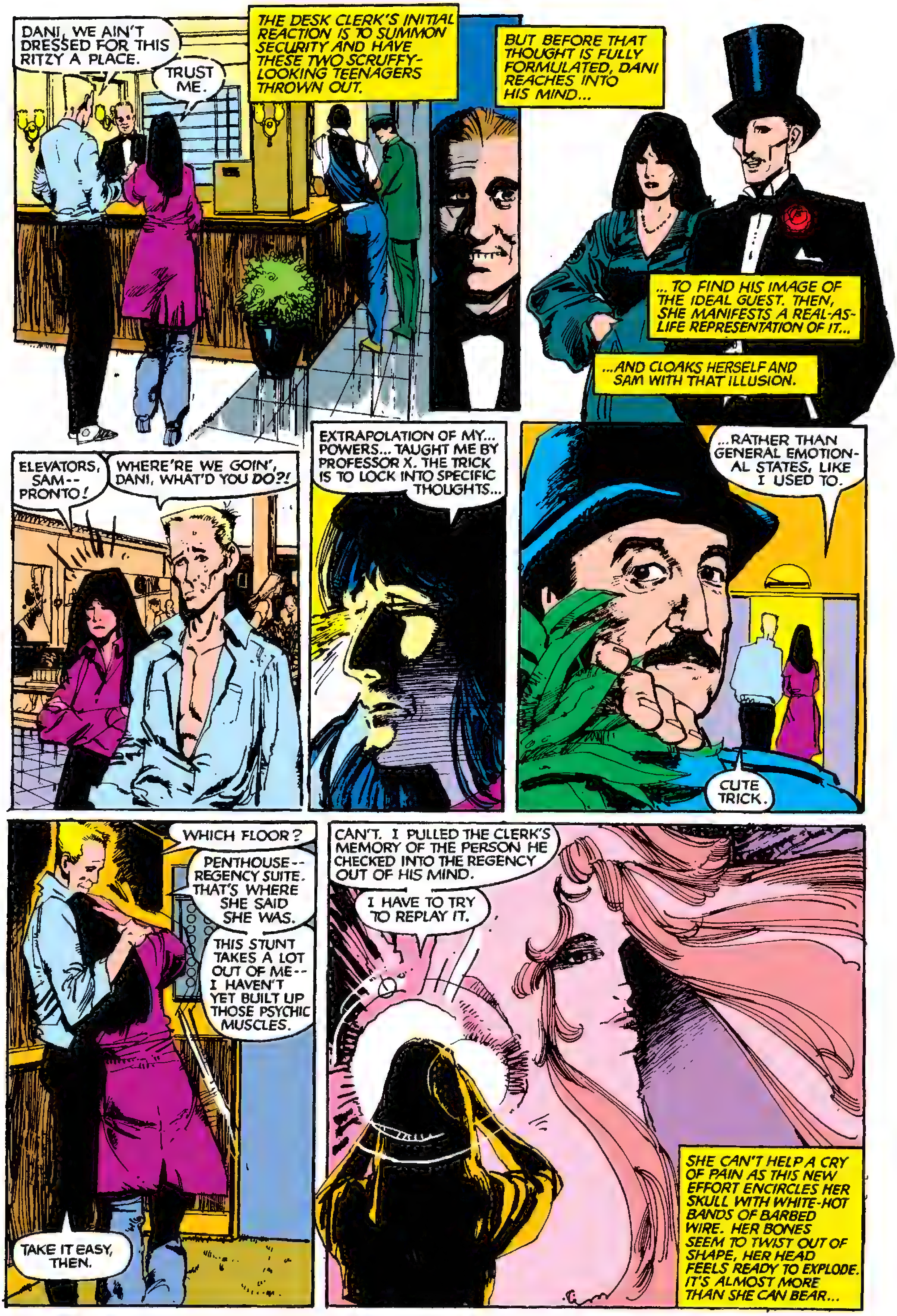

THERE'S BOBBY!
MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED BY HIS TEAMMATE'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE, SAM GUTHRIE ISN'T ABLE TO PROPERLY SLOW HIS DESCENT.
SAM, LOOK OUT-- THE GROUND!
FORTUNATELY, WHENEVER HE'S BLASTING, BOTH SAM AND ANYONE HE CARRIES ARE PROTECTED BY AN IMPENETRABLE ENERGY FIELD--
-- SO NEITHER HE NOR DANIELLE MOONSTAR ARE HURT BY THE IMPACT.
THERE HE IS-- BOBBY, YOU HURT, FELLA?!
IN THE DARKNESS, THEY DON'T SEE HIS LIGHTNING TRANSFORMATION. ALL THEY FIND IS AN UNCONSCIOUS, BADLY BATTERED YOUNG MAN.
AND PETER CANNOT HELP THEM...
...BECAUSE HIS LAST TITANIC EFFORT STRIPPED HIM OF HIS SENSES AS WELL.
Meanwhile--
--1500 MILES ROUGHLY DUE SOUTH, IN THE HEART OF THE INFAMOUS BERMUDA TRIANGLE...
NEARLY THERE. HOW'RE YOU FEELING?
I LIVE. I WISH I DID NOT.
I'VE ALWAYS AVOIDED TRAVELLING ANYWHERE BY SEA--NOW I KNOW WHY.

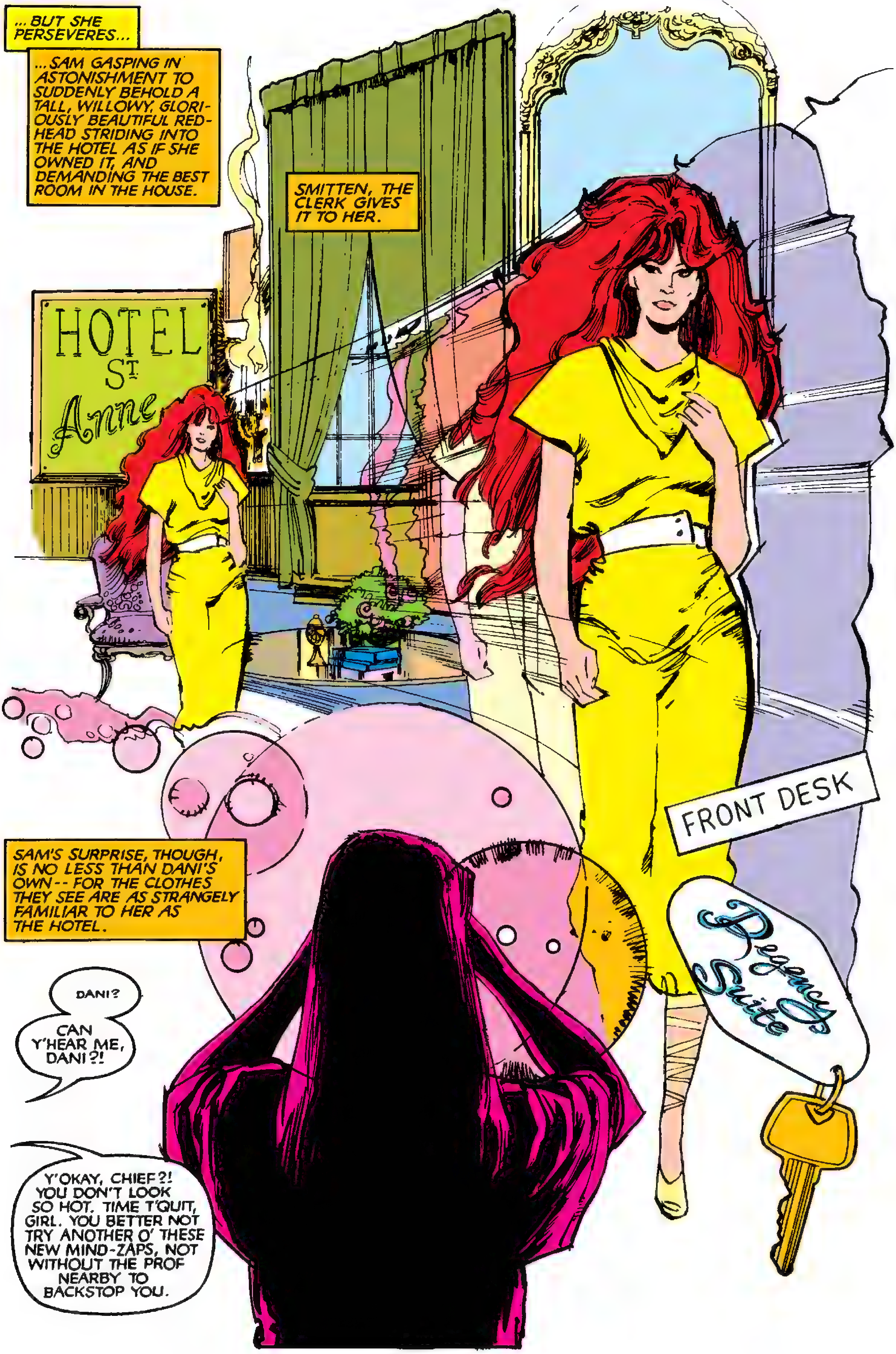

BUCK UP, ME HEARTY! WE'RE NEARLY THERE.
ARE YOU LAUGHING AT ME?
NO-- IT'S JUST, I NEVER IMAGINED THE ***MASTER OF MAGNETISM***, ONE OF THE FOREMOST MUTANTS ON THIS PLANET, GETTING SEASICK.
YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED IN THE HOSPITAL, YOU KNOW. YOU'VE BARELY BEGUN TO RECOVER FROM YOUR INJURIES!
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, ***Ms. FORRESTER***--
--THOUGH I HAVE SURVIVED FAR WORSE.
HOWEVER, CONSIDERING MY REPUTATION--AND THE FACT THAT, SOONER OR LATER, SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU WAS BOUND TO RECOGNIZE ME--
--I PREFER TO RECUPERATE AT HOME.

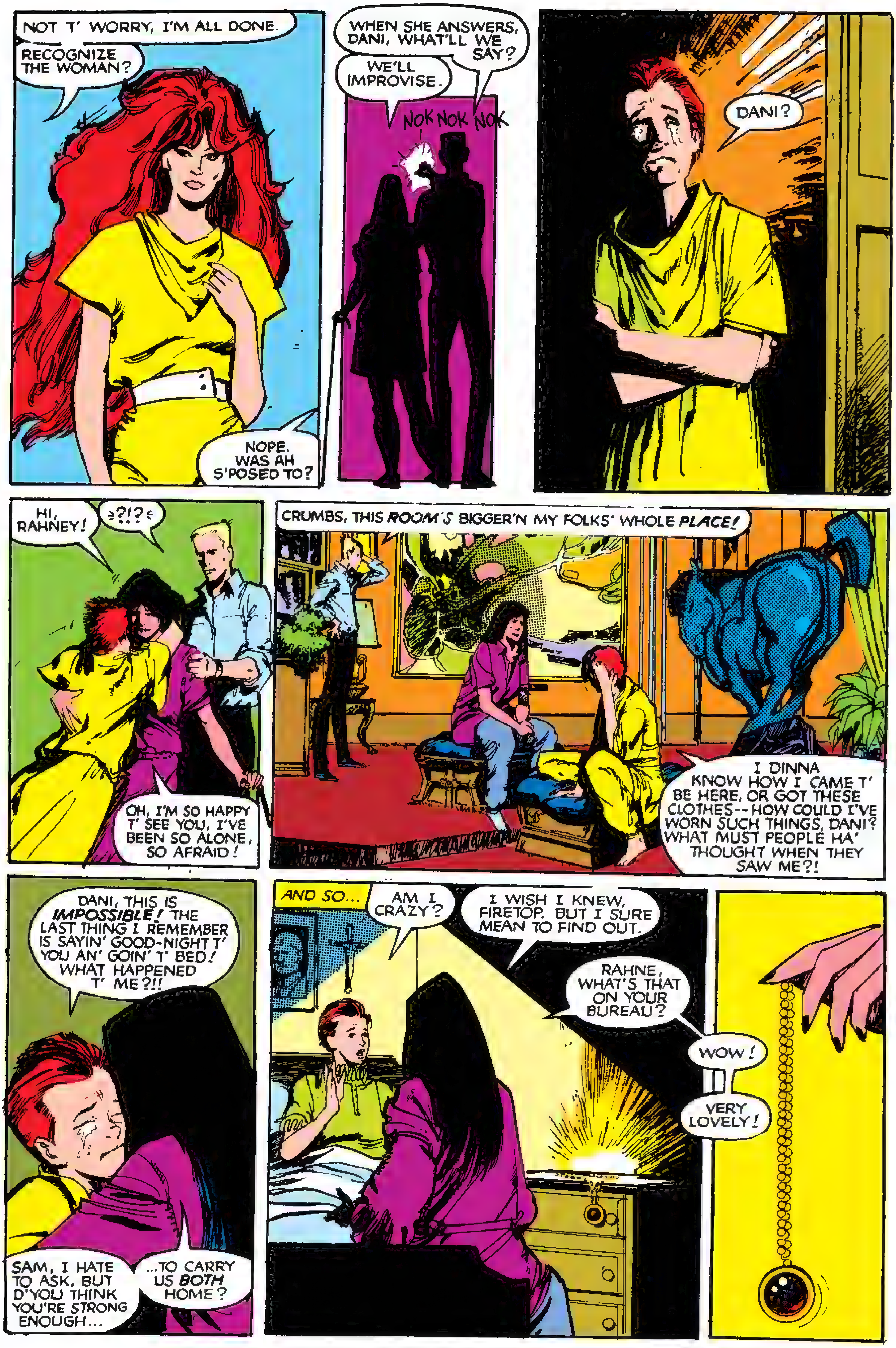

SORRY ABOUT THE MESS, I WASN'T EXPECTING VISITORS-- ESPECIALLY YOU. AFTER YOUR LAST BATTLE WITH THE X-MEN, WE ALL FIGURED YOU'D LEFT THE ISLAND FOR GOOD.*
THAT HAD BEEN MY INTENTION -- XAVIER DOES NOT USE THIS AS A BASE ANYMORE?
NOPE. HE'S BACK AT HIS MANSION IN NEW YORK.
THE FOOL. HERE, HE AND HIS PUPILS WOULD BE SAFE. HIS SCHOOL IS FAR TOO VULNERABLE.
THIS WORK, Ms. FORRESTER-- IS IT YOURS?
YAH-- 'FRAID SO. BUT, PLEASE, CALL ME **LEE**. I HATE FORMALITY.
I'VE BEEN RESEARCHING THE BEINGS WHO ORIGINALLY BUILT THIS CITY.
*X-MEN #150-- AnnN.
CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS, I'M COMING TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE INHABITANTS HERE...
...WEREN'T **PEOPLE**-- LIKE US, I MEAN-- AT ALL.
I CONCUR.
I WONDER IF THEY WERE EVEN NATIVE TO OUR PLANET-- OR OUR VERY DIMENSION. LET ME SHOW--
YIEARRGKH!
MAGNETO!
I **WARNED** YOU! YOUR BODY'S STILL INCAPABLE OF HANDLING THE STRESSES IMPOSED ON IT WHENEVER YOU USE YOUR POWERS!
LET ME--
--OWWHH!
AWAY, GIRL!
I NEED NO HELP, ESPECIALLY FROM A... **HUMAN**!
BULL!
IF IT WASN'T FOR THIS LOWLY HUMAN, BUSTER, YOU'D BE **SHARK MEAT!** YOU OWE ME YOUR **LIFE!**
BUT YOU WON'T ADMIT THAT, WILL YOU?! THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM IS SUPPOSED TO BE **ABOVE** EMOTIONS. FEELING FEAR, OR GRATITUDE -- OR **ANYTHING** -- MIGHT REVEAL THAT, AT HEART, FOR ALL YOUR POSTURING...
...MAGNETO IS STILL REALLY ONLY **HUMAN**.

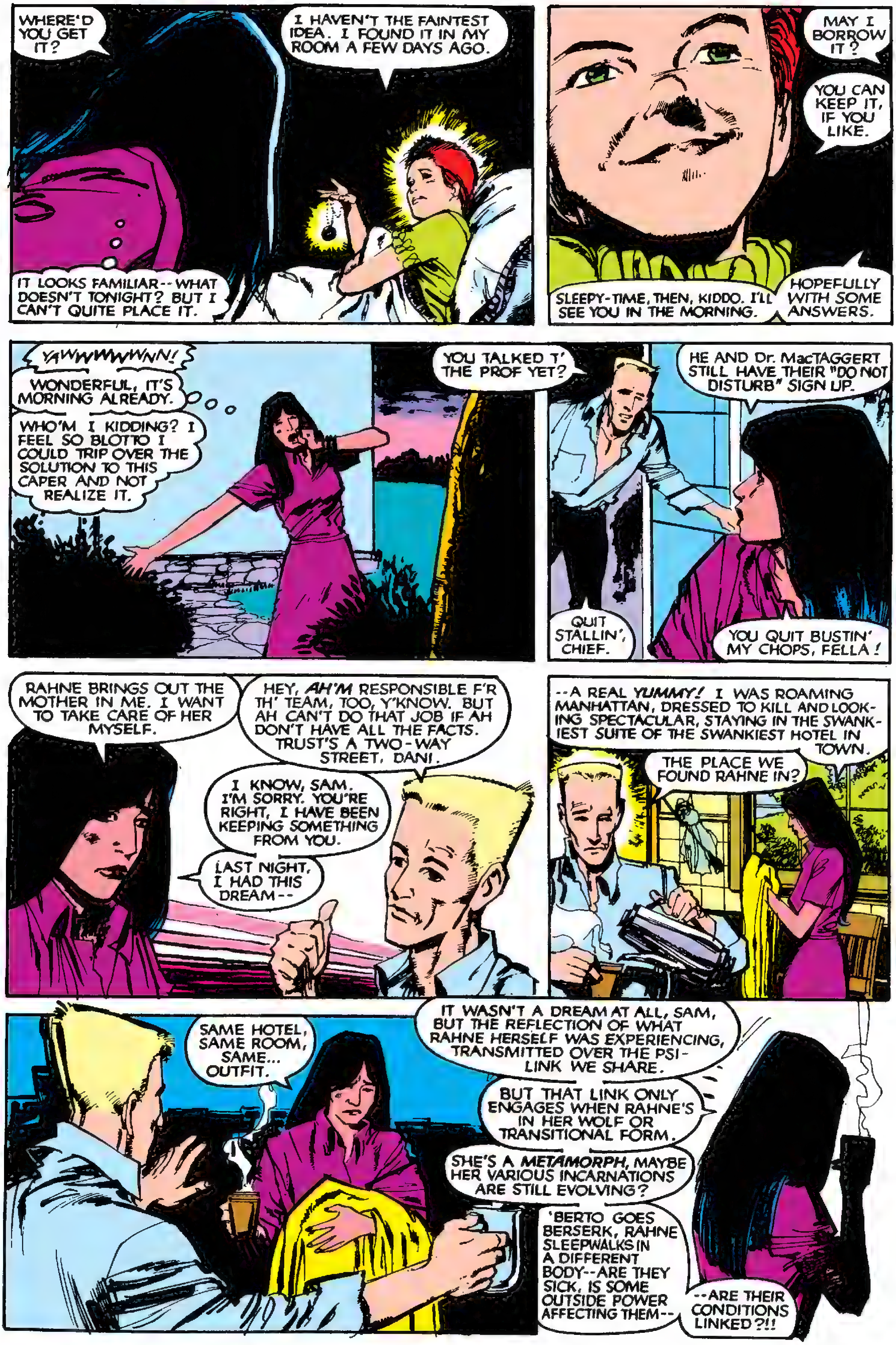

XAVIER'S MANSION, LATER THAT NIGHT...
HARRY AND THE YOUNG LADY ARE ALL RIGHT, THANK HEAVEN, AND I CAN TRUST HIM TO REMAIN DISCREET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED. OF COURSE, I'LL COVER THE COST OF REPAIRS TO HIS RESTAURANT.
I WISH THE REST OF THIS MESS COULD BE RESOLVED AS EASILY.
BOTH PETER AND ROBERTO ARE IN A DEEP COMA, MOIRA, SO MUCH SO THAT MY MIND-PROBES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY INEFFECTUAL.
YOU SAY ONLY ROBBIE WENT BERSERK, CHARLES?
THAT'S WHAT COLOSSUS INDICATED WHEN HE CALLED ME FOR HELP.
YET I CAN FIND NO ORGANIC-- OR PSYCHIC-- CAUSE FOR EITHER'S CONDITION. ACCORDING TO ALL OUR MEDISCANNERS--ALL THE DATA--
--THEY ARE IN PERFECT HEALTH. THEY SHOULDN'T EVEN BE UNCONSCIOUS!
THINK WE SHOULD WAKE THE OTHERS?
NO POINT, SAM-- 'TIL WE HEAR SOME NEWS FROM DOWNSTAIRS. WHAT'S TAKING THE PROF AND **MOIRA MacTAGGERT** SO LONG?! IT FEELS LIKE THEY'VE BEEN IN THE INFIRMARY FOREVER!
AIN'T EVEN BEEN AN HOUR YET. NOW YOU KNOW HOW **WE** FELT, WHEN YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL.
WHAT THE BLAZES WAS 'BERTO DOING AT HARRY'S?! THAT'S A **SALOON**, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, OFF-LIMITS TO **ALL** THE NEW MUTANTS!
HE KNEW THAT, SAM. WHAT COULD HAVE **POSSESSED** HIM?!

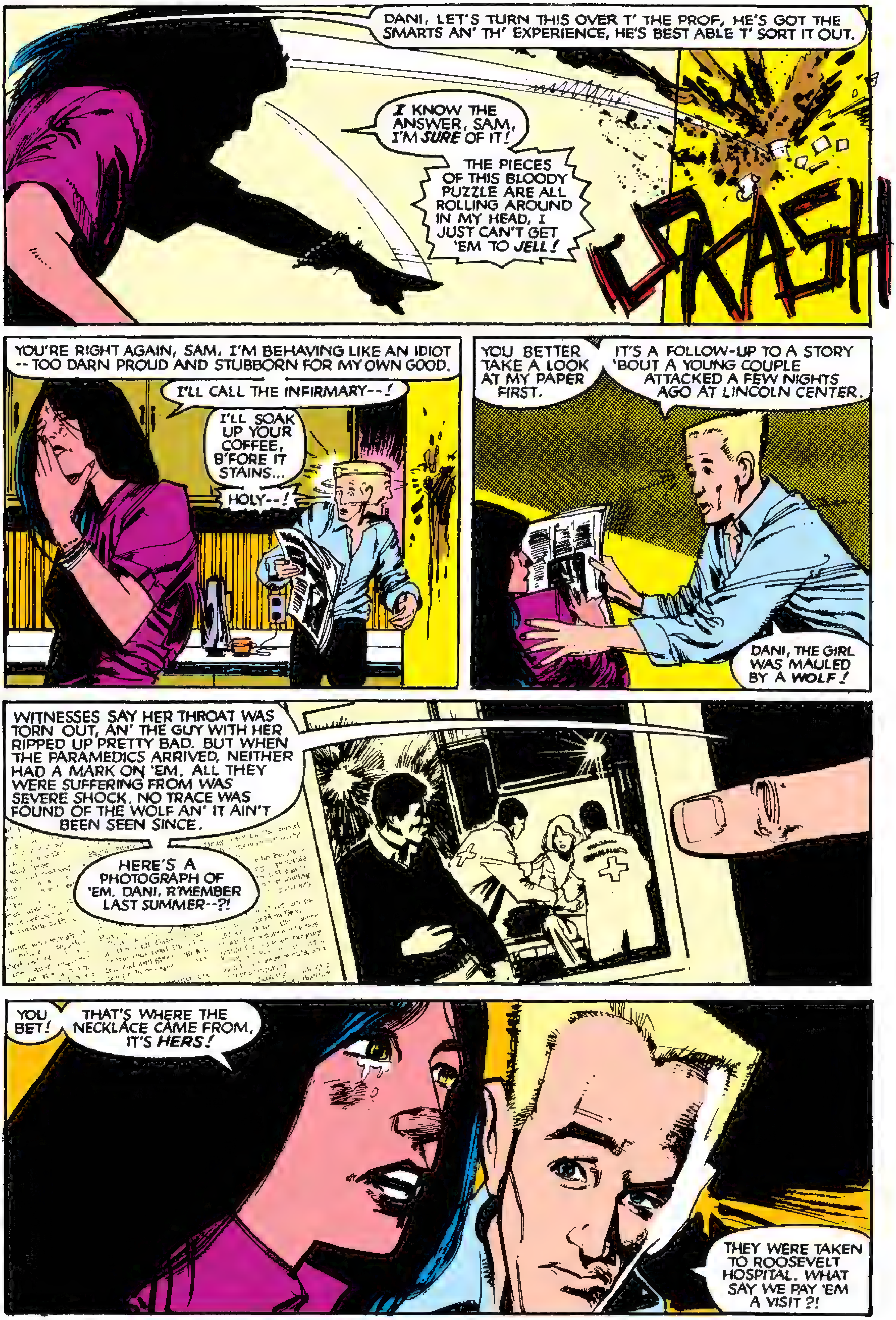

BEATS ME, CHIEF. AH THINK THERE'S SOMETHIN' B'TWEEN HIM AN' THAT WAITRESS, MOLLY-- MAYBE HE WENT T'SEE HER?
HECK, AH DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE WAS OUTTA THE HOUSE. LAST AH SAW, BOBBY WAS HEADIN' F'R BED, COMPLAININ' OF A TERRIFIC HEADACHE.
GREAT, ANOTHER CLUE. AND I HATE MYSTERIES -- NOW WHAT?! THE PHONE?!?
BRRING!
WHO COULD BE CALLING AT THIS UNGODLY...
...HOUR?
DANI?
WHAT'S UP, GIRL, WHERE YOU GOIN'-- *DANI?!!*
*ARRGH!!*
MY *LEGS*--!
ARE YOU *CRAZY*, RUNNIN' UPSTAIRS LIKE THAT--?!
YOU'RE NOWHERE NEAR WELL ENOUGH T' HANDLE THAT KIND OF EXERTION!
DON'T YELL, SAM. I'VE LEARNED MY LESSON--
"-- JUST TAKE ME TO *RAHNE'S* ROOM, QUICK AS YOU CAN!"
THERE HAS T' BE AN EASIER WAY THAN THIS. AH'M PUSHIN' PRETTY NEAR MY LIMIT, DANI. IF AH RUN OUT OF GAS IN MID-AIR ...
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, SAM.
THAT MAKES *ONE* OF US.
DANI, RAHNE'S ROOM WAS EMPTY, THE BED NOT SLEPT IN-- WE SHOULD'A TOLD THE PROF B'FORE TAKIN' OFF.
LOVE
UNDEAD GO GO
GIRLS
NO, NOT YET-- LOOK OUT FOR THAT *CAR!!*
SAM, BE *CAREFUL!!*
AH KNEW WHAT AH WAS DOIN'-- SCAREDY CAT!
CREEP.
THIS IS OUR DESTINATION.
WEIRD-- I'M CERTAIN I'VE NEVER BEEN HERE BEFORE, YET IT LOOKS AND FEELS SO *FAMILIAR*.

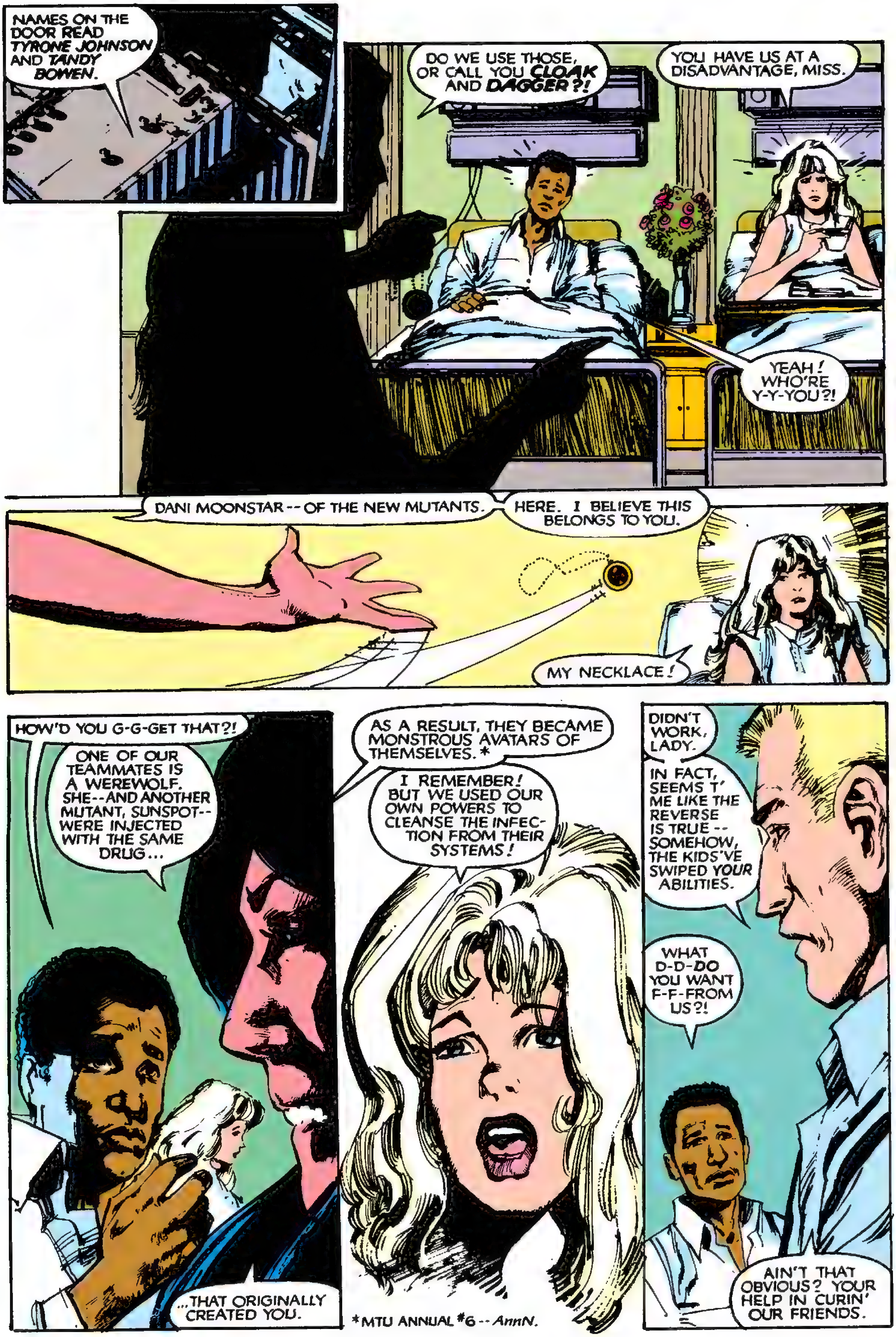

DANI, WE AIN'T DRESSED FOR THIS RITZY A PLACE.
TRUST ME.
THE DESK CLERK'S INITIAL REACTION IS TO SUMMON SECURITY AND HAVE THESE TWO SCRUFFY-LOOKING TEENAGERS THROWN OUT.
BUT BEFORE THAT THOUGHT IS FULLY FORMULATED, DANI REACHES INTO HIS MIND...
...TO FIND HIS IMAGE OF THE IDEAL GUEST. THEN, SHE MANIFESTS A REAL-AS-LIFE REPRESENTATION OF IT...
...AND CLOAKS HERSELF AND SAM WITH THAT ILLUSION.
ELEVATORS, SAM--PRONTO!
WHERE'RE WE GOIN', DANI, WHAT'D YOU DO?!
EXTRAPOLATION OF MY... POWERS... TAUGHT ME BY PROFESSOR X. THE TRICK IS TO LOCK INTO SPECIFIC THOUGHTS...
...RATHER THAN GENERAL EMOTIONAL STATES, LIKE I USED TO.
CUTE TRICK.
WHICH FLOOR?
PENTHOUSE--REGENCY SUITE. THAT'S WHERE SHE SAID SHE WAS.
THIS STUNT TAKES A LOT OUT OF ME--I HAVEN'T YET BUILT UP THOSE PSYCHIC MUSCLES.
TAKE IT EASY, THEN.
CAN'T. I PULLED THE CLERK'S MEMORY OF THE PERSON HE CHECKED INTO THE REGENCY OUT OF HIS MIND.
I HAVE TO TRY TO REPLAY IT.
SHE CAN'T HELP A CRY OF PAIN AS THIS NEW EFFORT ENCIRCLES HER SKULL WITH WHITE-HOT BANDS OF BARBED WIRE. HER BONES SEEM TO TWIST OUT OF SHAPE, HER HEAD FEELS READY TO EXPLODE. IT'S ALMOST MORE THAN SHE CAN BEAR...

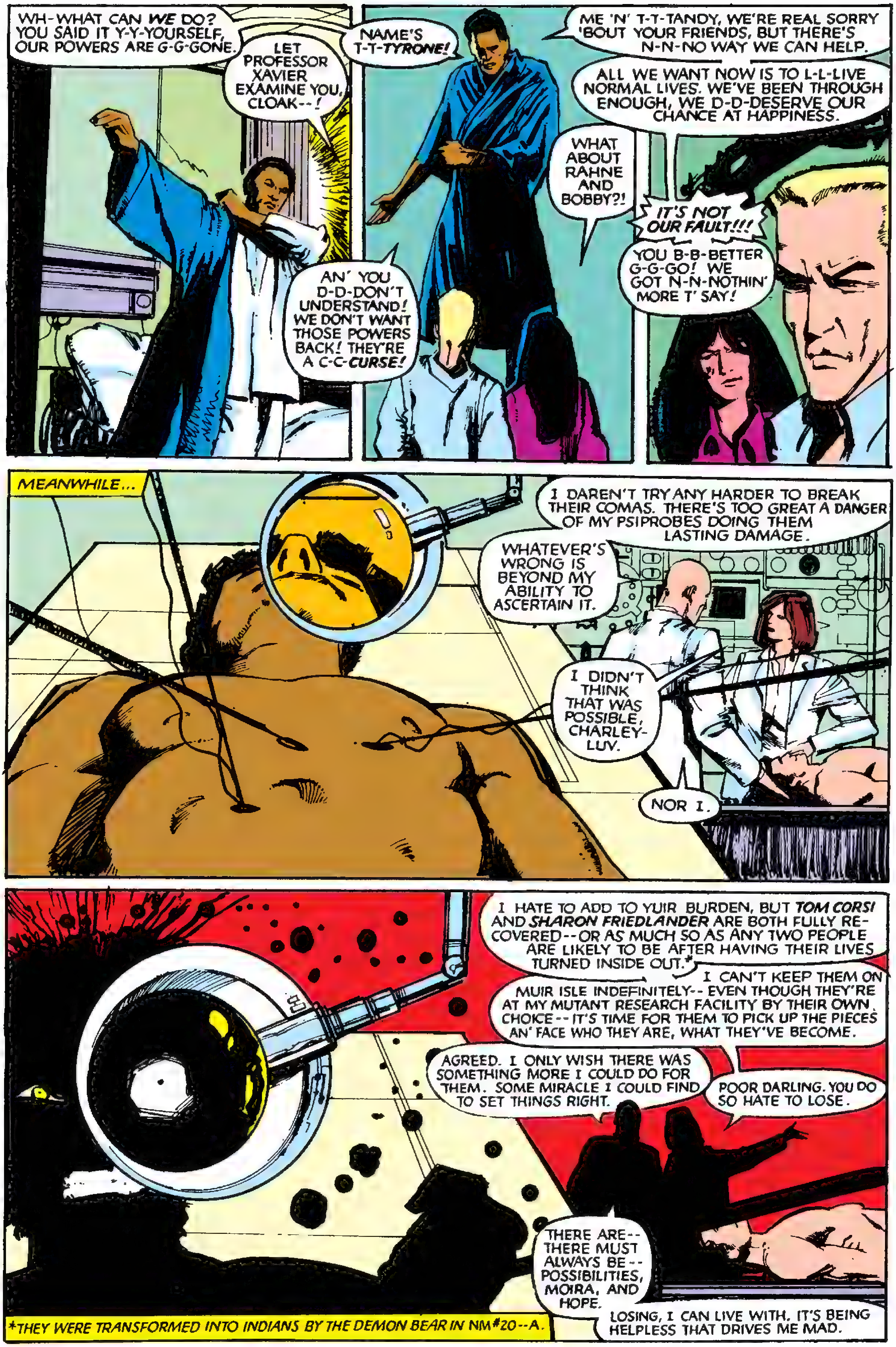

...BUT SHE PERSEVERES...
...SAM GASPING IN ASTONISHMENT TO SUDDENLY BEHOLD A TALL, WILLOWY, GLORIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL RED-HEAD STRIDING INTO THE HOTEL AS IF SHE OWNED IT, AND DEMANDING THE BEST ROOM IN THE HOUSE.
SMITTEN, THE CLERK GIVES IT TO HER.
HOTEL St Anne
FRONT DESK
Regency Suite
SAM'S SURPRISE, THOUGH, IS NO LESS THAN DANI'S OWN-- FOR THE CLOTHES THEY SEE ARE AS STRANGELY FAMILIAR TO HER AS THE HOTEL.
DANI?
CAN Y'HEAR ME, DANI?!
Y'OKAY, CHIEF?! YOU DON'T LOOK SO HOT. TIME T'QUIT, GIRL. YOU BETTER NOT TRY ANOTHER O' THESE NEW MIND-ZAPS, NOT WITHOUT THE PROF NEARBY TO BACKSTOP YOU.

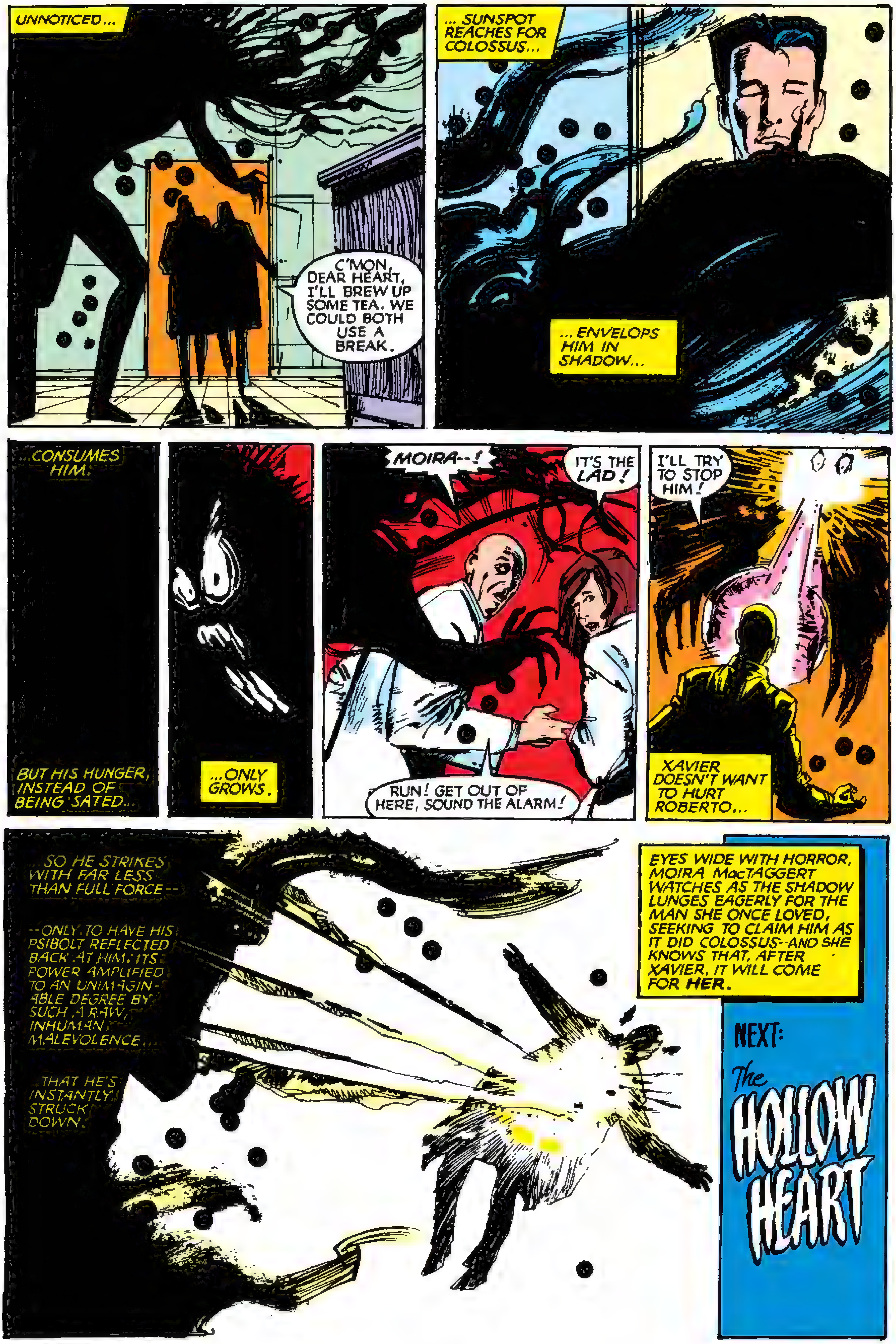

NOT T' WORRY, I'M ALL DONE.
RECOGNIZE THE WOMAN?
NOPE. WAS AH S'POSED TO?
WHEN SHE ANSWERS, DANI, WHAT'LL WE SAY?
WE'LL IMPROVISE.
NOK NOK NOK
DANI?
HI, RAHNEY!
¿?!?¿
OH, I'M SO HAPPY T' SEE YOU. I'VE BEEN SO ALONE, SO AFRAID!
CRUMBS, THIS *ROOM'S* BIGGER'N MY FOLKS' WHOLE *PLACE!*
I DINNA KNOW HOW I CAME T' BE HERE, OR GOT THESE CLOTHES--HOW COULD I'VE WORN SUCH THINGS, DANI? WHAT MUST PEOPLE HA' THOUGHT WHEN THEY SAW ME?!
DANI, THIS IS *IMPOSSIBLE!* THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS SAYIN' GOOD-NIGHT T' YOU AN' GOIN' T' BED! WHAT HAPPENED T' ME?!!
SAM, I HATE TO ASK, BUT D'YOU THINK YOU'RE STRONG ENOUGH...
...TO CARRY US *BOTH* HOME?
*AND SO...*
AM I CRAZY?
I WISH I KNEW, FIRETOP. BUT I SURE MEAN TO FIND OUT.
RAHNE, WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR BUREAU?
WOW!
VERY LOVELY!

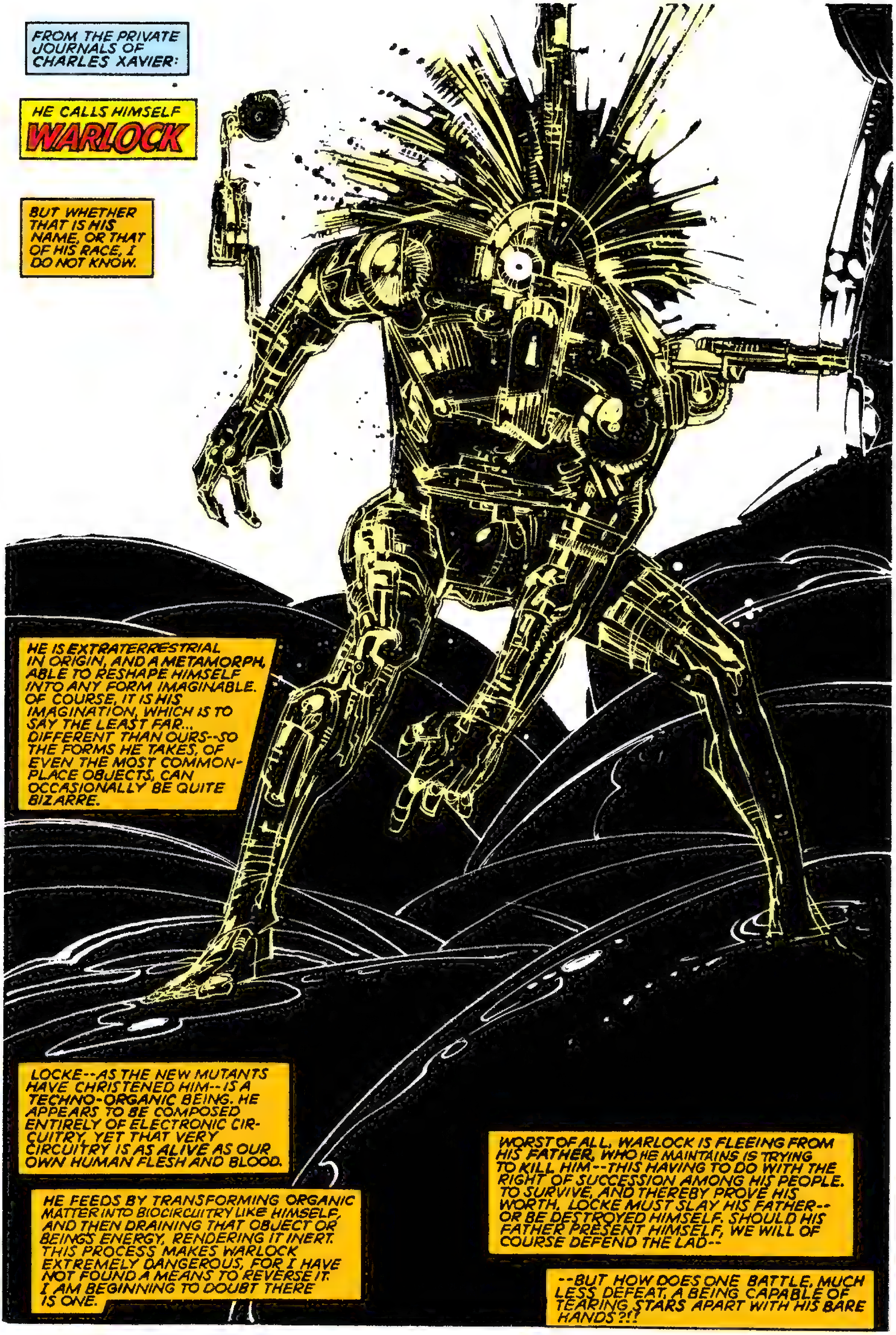

WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA. I FOUND IT IN MY ROOM A FEW DAYS AGO.
IT LOOKS FAMILIAR--WHAT DOESN'T TONIGHT? BUT I CAN'T QUITE PLACE IT.
MAY I BORROW IT?
YOU CAN KEEP IT, IF YOU LIKE.
SLEEPY-TIME, THEN, KIDDO. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.
HOPEFULLY WITH SOME ANSWERS.
YAWWWWWNN!
WONDERFUL, IT'S MORNING ALREADY.
WHO'M I KIDDING? I FEEL SO BLOTTO I COULD TRIP OVER THE SOLUTION TO THIS CAPER AND NOT REALIZE IT.
YOU TALKED T' THE PROF YET?
HE AND Dr. MacTAGGERT STILL HAVE THEIR "DO NOT DISTURB" SIGN UP.
QUIT STALLIN', CHIEF.
YOU QUIT BUSTIN' MY CHOPS, FELLA!
RAHNE BRINGS OUT THE MOTHER IN ME. I WANT TO TAKE CARE OF HER MYSELF.
HEY, AH'M RESPONSIBLE F'R TH' TEAM, TOO, Y'KNOW. BUT AH CAN'T DO THAT JOB IF AH DON'T HAVE ALL THE FACTS. TRUST'S A TWO-WAY STREET, DANI.
I KNOW, SAM. I'M SORRY. YOU'RE RIGHT, I HAVE BEEN KEEPING SOMETHING FROM YOU.
LAST NIGHT, I HAD THIS DREAM--
--A REAL YUMMY! I WAS ROAMING MANHATTAN, DRESSED TO KILL AND LOOKING SPECTACULAR, STAYING IN THE SWANKIEST SUITE OF THE SWANKIEST HOTEL IN TOWN.
THE PLACE WE FOUND RAHNE IN?
SAME HOTEL, SAME ROOM, SAME... OUTFIT.
IT WASN'T A DREAM AT ALL, SAM, BUT THE REFLECTION OF WHAT RAHNE HERSELF WAS EXPERIENCING, TRANSMITTED OVER THE PSI-LINK WE SHARE.
BUT THAT LINK ONLY ENGAGES WHEN RAHNE'S IN HER WOLF OR TRANSITIONAL FORM.
SHE'S A METAMORPH, MAYBE HER VARIOUS INCARNATIONS ARE STILL EVOLVING?
'BERTO GOES BERSERK, RAHNE SLEEPWALKS IN A DIFFERENT BODY--ARE THEY SICK, IS SOME OUTSIDE POWER AFFECTING THEM--
--ARE THEIR CONDITIONS LINKED?!!


DANI, LET'S TURN THIS OVER T' THE PROF, HE'S GOT THE SMARTS AN' TH' EXPERIENCE, HE'S BEST ABLE T' SORT IT OUT.
*I* KNOW THE ANSWER, SAM, I'M *SURE* OF IT!
THE PIECES OF THIS BLOODY PUZZLE ARE ALL ROLLING AROUND IN MY HEAD, I JUST CAN'T GET 'EM TO *JELL!*
CRASH
YOU'RE RIGHT AGAIN, SAM. I'M BEHAVING LIKE AN IDIOT -- TOO DARN PROUD AND STUBBORN FOR MY OWN GOOD.
I'LL CALL THE INFIRMARY--!
I'LL SOAK UP YOUR COFFEE, B'FORE IT STAINS...
HOLY--!
YOU BETTER TAKE A LOOK AT MY PAPER FIRST.
IT'S A FOLLOW-UP TO A STORY 'BOUT A YOUNG COUPLE ATTACKED A FEW NIGHTS AGO AT LINCOLN CENTER.
DANI, THE GIRL WAS MAULED BY A *WOLF!*
WITNESSES SAY HER THROAT WAS TORN OUT, AN' THE GUY WITH HER RIPPED UP PRETTY BAD. BUT WHEN THE PARAMEDICS ARRIVED, NEITHER HAD A MARK ON 'EM. ALL THEY WERE SUFFERING FROM WAS SEVERE SHOCK. NO TRACE WAS FOUND OF THE WOLF AN' IT AIN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE.
HERE'S A PHOTOGRAPH OF 'EM. DANI. R'MEMBER LAST *SUMMER*--?!
YOU BET!
THAT'S WHERE THE NECKLACE CAME FROM, IT'S *HERS!*
THEY WERE TAKEN TO ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL. WHAT SAY WE PAY 'EM A VISIT?!


NAMES ON THE DOOR READ TYRONE JOHNSON AND TANDY BOWEN.
DO WE USE THOSE, OR CALL YOU CLOAK AND DAGGER?!
YOU HAVE US AT A DISADVANTAGE, MISS.
YEAH! WHO'RE Y-Y-YOU?!
DANI MOONSTAR -- OF THE NEW MUTANTS.
HERE. I BELIEVE THIS BELONGS TO YOU.
MY NECKLACE!
HOW'D YOU G-G-GET THAT?!
ONE OF OUR TEAMMATES IS A WEREWOLF. SHE--AND ANOTHER MUTANT, SUNSPOT--WERE INJECTED WITH THE SAME DRUG...
...THAT ORIGINALLY CREATED YOU.
AS A RESULT, THEY BECAME MONSTROUS AVATARS OF THEMSELVES.*
I REMEMBER! BUT WE USED OUR OWN POWERS TO CLEANSE THE INFECTION FROM THEIR SYSTEMS!
*MTU ANNUAL #6 -- AnnN.
DIDN'T WORK, LADY.
IN FACT, SEEMS T' ME LIKE THE REVERSE IS TRUE -- SOMEHOW, THE KIDS'VE SWIPED YOUR ABILITIES.
WHAT D-D-DO YOU WANT F-F-FROM US?!
AIN'T THAT OBVIOUS? YOUR HELP IN CURIN' OUR FRIENDS.


WH-WHAT CAN *WE* DO? YOU SAID IT Y-Y-YOURSELF, OUR POWERS ARE *G-G-GONE*.
LET PROFESSOR XAVIER EXAMINE YOU, CLOAK--!
NAME'S T-T-*TYRONE!*
AN' YOU D-D-DON'T UNDERSTAND! WE DON'T WANT THOSE POWERS BACK! THEY'RE A C-C-*CURSE!*
ME 'N' T-T-TANDY, WE'RE REAL SORRY 'BOUT YOUR FRIENDS, BUT THERE'S N-N-NO WAY WE CAN HELP.
ALL WE WANT NOW IS TO L-L-LIVE NORMAL LIVES. WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH, WE D-D-DESERVE OUR CHANCE AT HAPPINESS.
WHAT ABOUT RAHNE AND BOBBY?!
*IT'S NOT OUR FAULT!!!*
YOU B-B-BETTER G-G-GO! WE GOT N-N-NOTHIN' MORE T' SAY!
*MEANWHILE...*
I DAREN'T TRY ANY HARDER TO BREAK THEIR COMAS. THERE'S TOO GREAT A DANGER OF MY PSIPROBES DOING THEM LASTING DAMAGE.
WHATEVER'S WRONG IS BEYOND MY ABILITY TO ASCERTAIN IT.
I DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS POSSIBLE, CHARLEY-LUV.
NOR I.
I HATE TO ADD TO YUIR BURDEN, BUT *TOM CORSI* AND *SHARON FRIEDLANDER* ARE BOTH FULLY RECOVERED--OR AS MUCH SO AS ANY TWO PEOPLE ARE LIKELY TO BE AFTER HAVING THEIR LIVES TURNED INSIDE OUT.*
I CAN'T KEEP THEM ON MUIR ISLE INDEFINITELY-- EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE AT MY MUTANT RESEARCH FACILITY BY THEIR OWN CHOICE -- IT'S TIME FOR THEM TO PICK UP THE PIECES AN' FACE WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY'VE BECOME.
AGREED. I ONLY WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING MORE I COULD DO FOR THEM. SOME MIRACLE I COULD FIND TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
POOR DARLING. YOU DO SO HATE TO LOSE.
THERE ARE-- THERE MUST ALWAYS BE -- POSSIBILITIES, MOIRA, AND HOPE.
LOSING, I CAN LIVE WITH. IT'S BEING HELPLESS THAT DRIVES ME MAD.
*THEY WERE TRANSFORMED INTO INDIANS BY THE DEMON BEAR IN NM#20--A.*


UNNOTICED...
C'MON, DEAR HEART, I'LL BREW UP SOME TEA. WE COULD BOTH USE A BREAK.
...SUNSPOT REACHES FOR COLOSSUS...
...ENVELOPS HIM IN SHADOW...
...CONSUMES HIM.
BUT HIS HUNGER, INSTEAD OF BEING SATED...
...ONLY GROWS.
MOIRA--!
IT'S THE LAD!
RUN! GET OUT OF HERE, SOUND THE ALARM!
I'LL TRY TO STOP HIM!
XAVIER DOESN'T WANT TO HURT ROBERTO...
SO HE STRIKES WITH FAR LESS THAN FULL FORCE--
--ONLY TO HAVE HIS PSIBOLT REFLECTED BACK AT HIM, ITS POWER AMPLIFIED TO AN UNIMAGINABLE DEGREE BY SUCH A RAW, INHUMAN MALEVOLENCE...
THAT HE'S INSTANTLY STRUCK DOWN.
EYES WIDE WITH HORROR, MOIRA MacTAGGERT WATCHES AS THE SHADOW LUNGES EAGERLY FOR THE MAN SHE ONCE LOVED, SEEKING TO CLAIM HIM AS IT DID COLOSSUS--AND SHE KNOWS THAT, AFTER XAVIER, IT WILL COME FOR HER.
NEXT: The HOLLOW HEART


FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNALS OF CHARLES XAVIER:
HE CALLS HIMSELF WARLOCK
BUT WHETHER THAT IS HIS NAME, OR THAT OF HIS RACE, I DO NOT KNOW.
HE IS EXTRATERRESTRIAL IN ORIGIN, AND A METAMORPH, ABLE TO RESHAPE HIMSELF INTO ANY FORM IMAGINABLE. OF COURSE, IT IS HIS IMAGINATION, WHICH IS TO SAY THE LEAST FAR... DIFFERENT THAN OURS--SO THE FORMS HE TAKES, OF EVEN THE MOST COMMONPLACE OBJECTS, CAN OCCASIONALLY BE QUITE BIZARRE.
LOCKE--AS THE NEW MUTANTS HAVE CHRISTENED HIM--IS A TECHNO-ORGANIC BEING. HE APPEARS TO BE COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY, YET THAT VERY CIRCUITRY IS AS ALIVE AS OUR OWN HUMAN FLESH AND BLOOD.
HE FEEDS BY TRANSFORMING ORGANIC MATTER INTO BIOCIRCUITRY LIKE HIMSELF, AND THEN DRAINING THAT OBJECT OR BEING'S ENERGY, RENDERING IT INERT. THIS PROCESS MAKES WARLOCK EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND A MEANS TO REVERSE IT. I AM BEGINNING TO DOUBT THERE IS ONE.
WORST OF ALL, WARLOCK IS FLEEING FROM HIS FATHER, WHO HE MAINTAINS IS TRYING TO KILL HIM--THIS HAVING TO DO WITH THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION AMONG HIS PEOPLE. TO SURVIVE, AND THEREBY PROVE HIS WORTH, LOCKE MUST SLAY HIS FATHER--OR BE DESTROYED HIMSELF. SHOULD HIS FATHER PRESENT HIMSELF, WE WILL OF COURSE DEFEND THE LAD--
--BUT HOW DOES ONE BATTLE, MUCH LESS DEFEAT, A BEING CAPABLE OF TEARING STARS APART WITH HIS BARE HANDS?!?

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THE NEW MUTANTS
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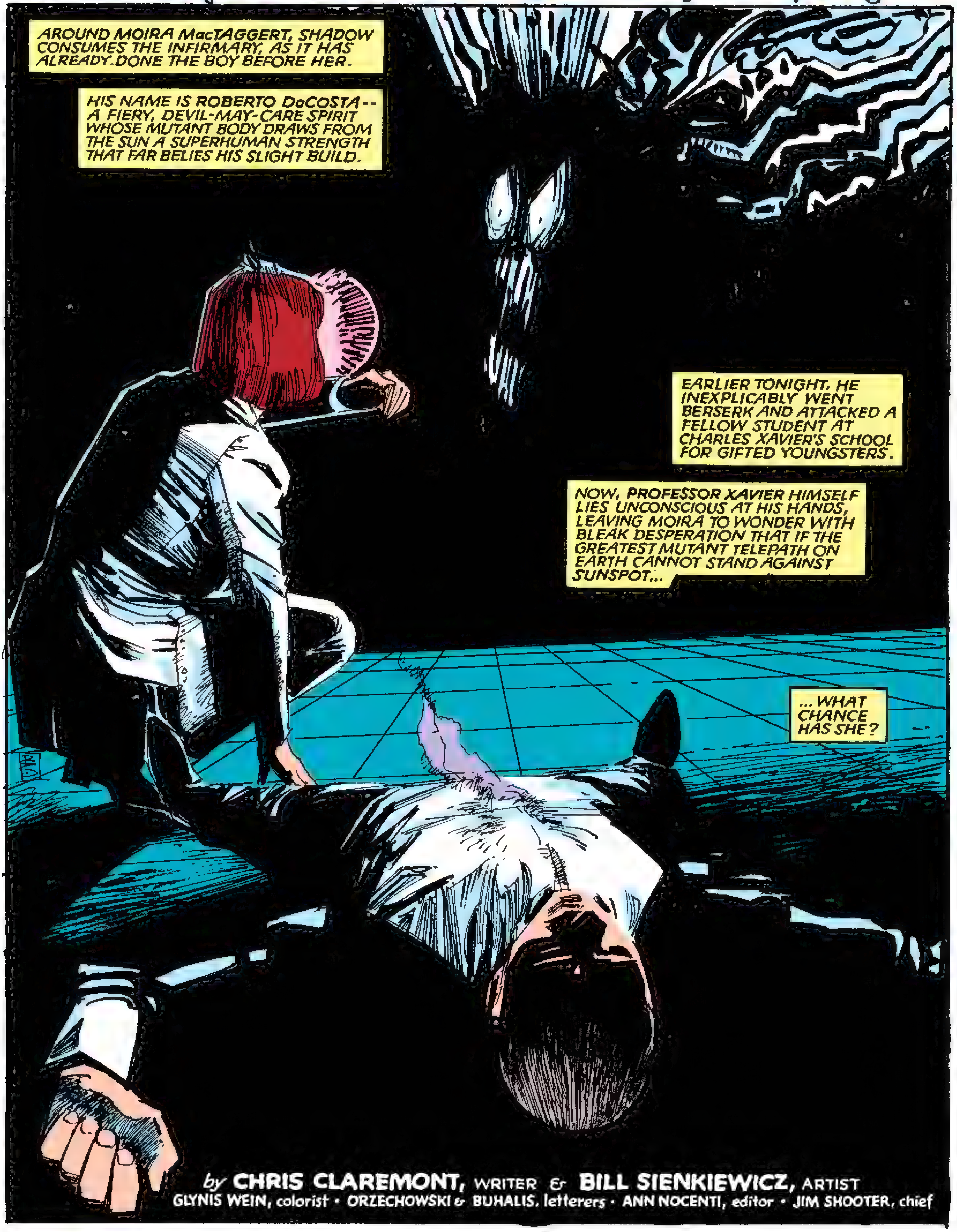
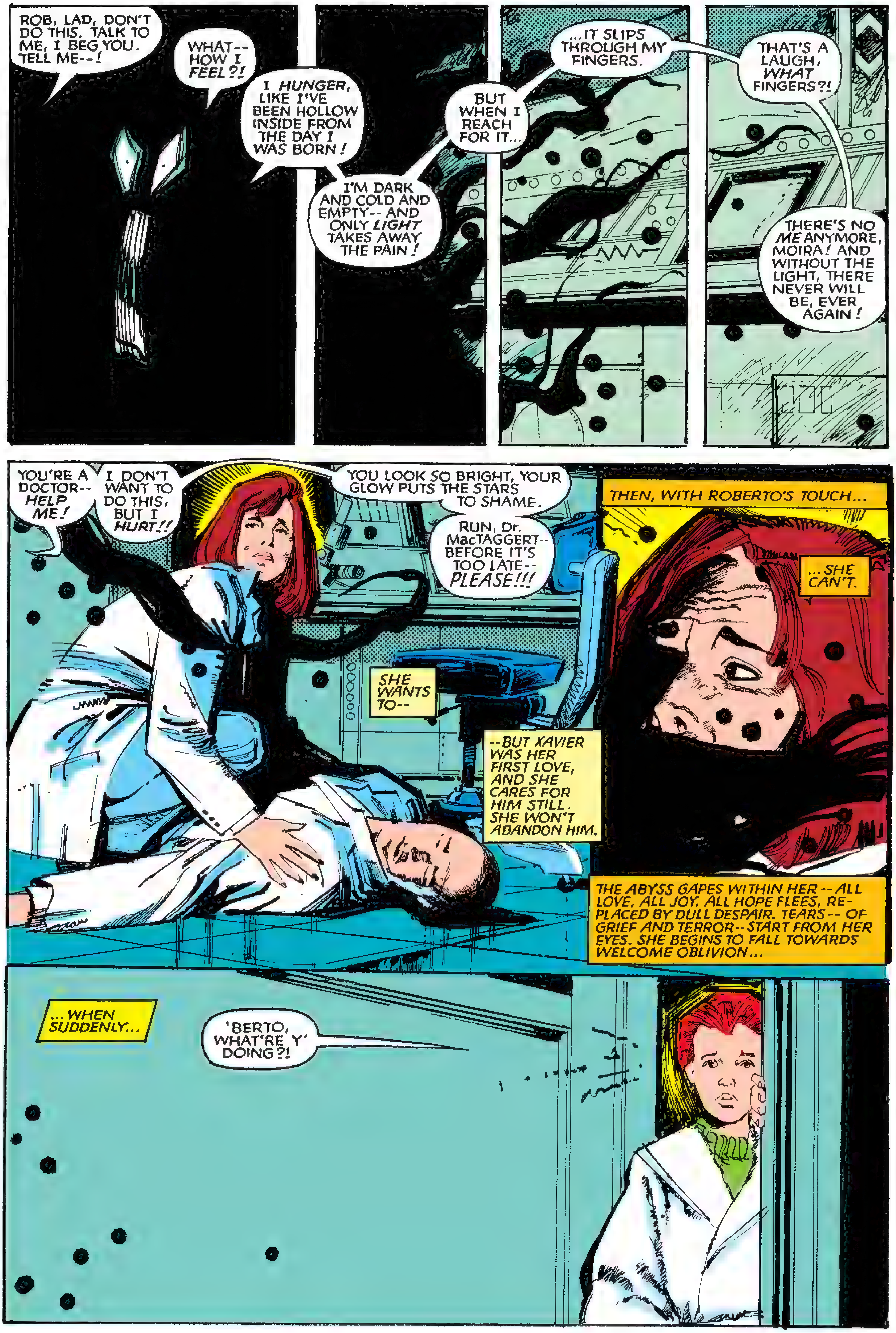
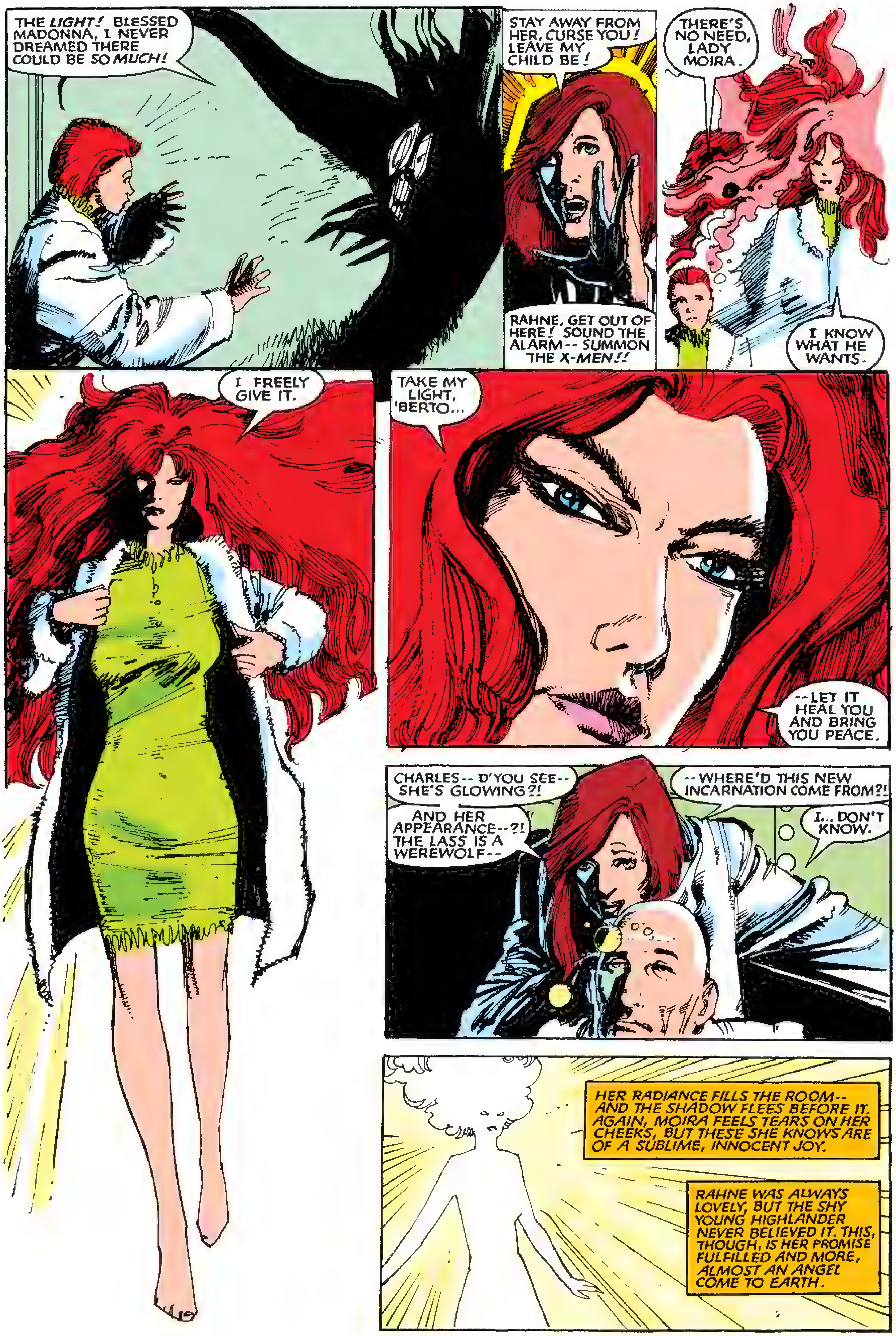
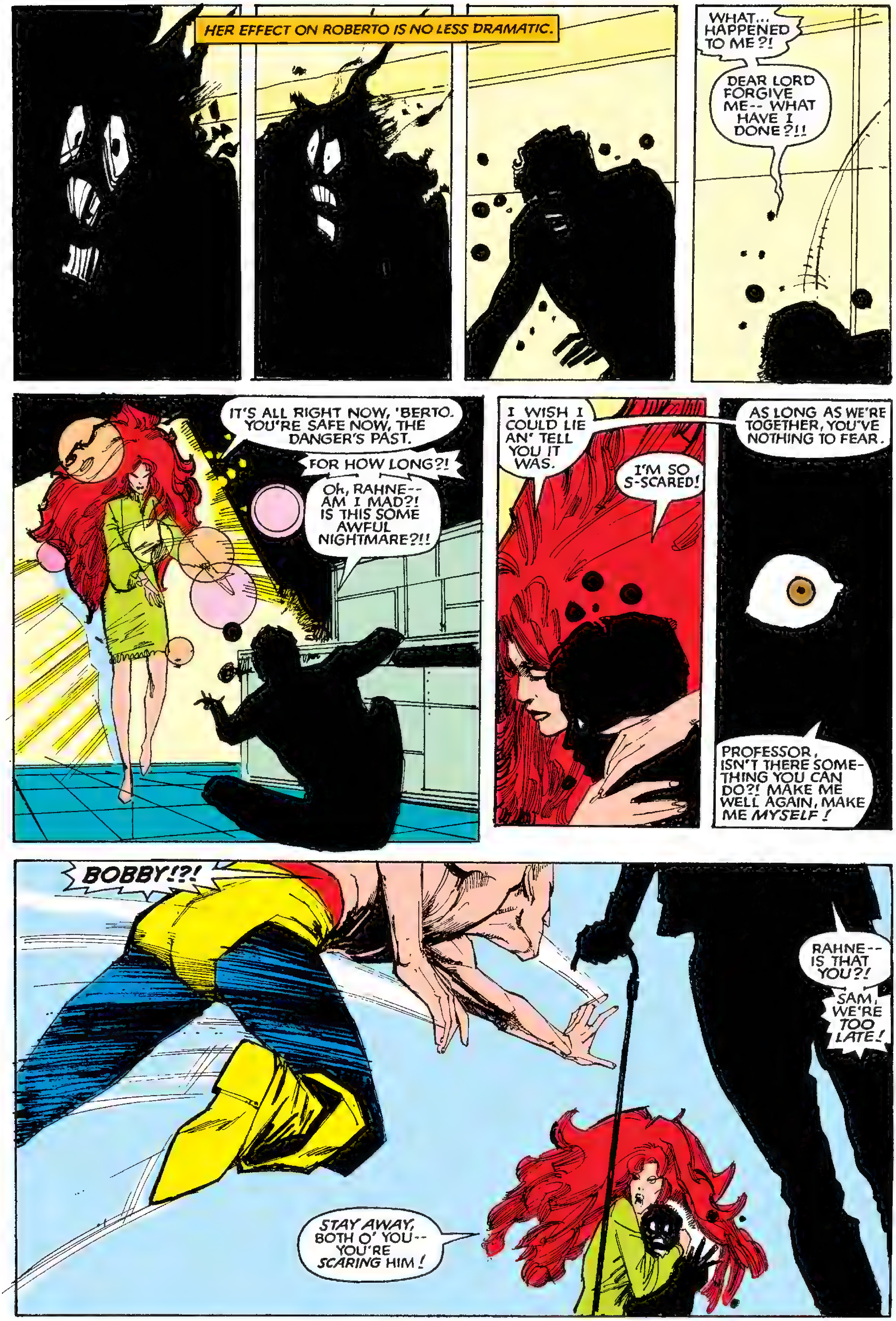
STAN LEE PRESENTS...

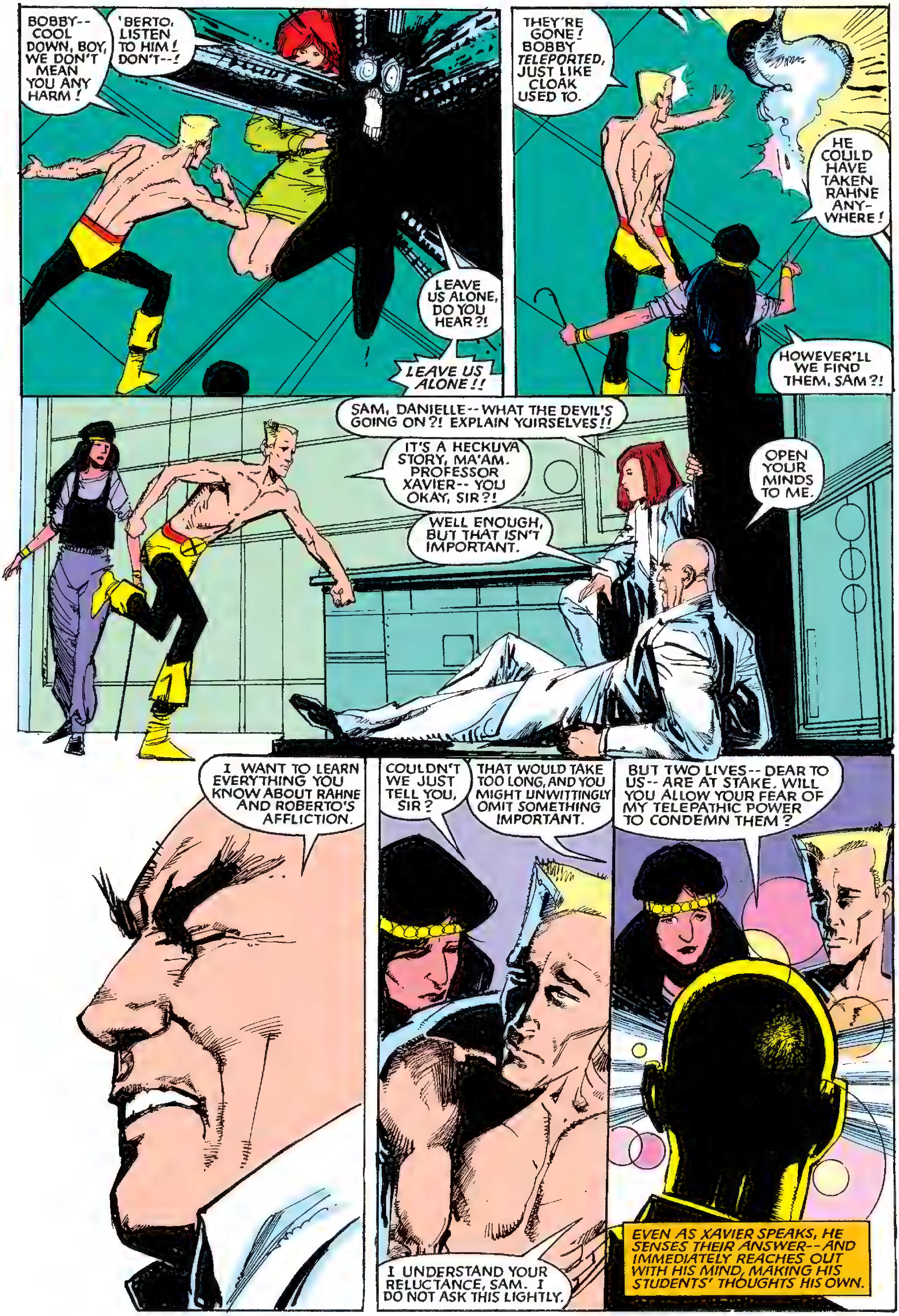
# The HOLLOW HEART

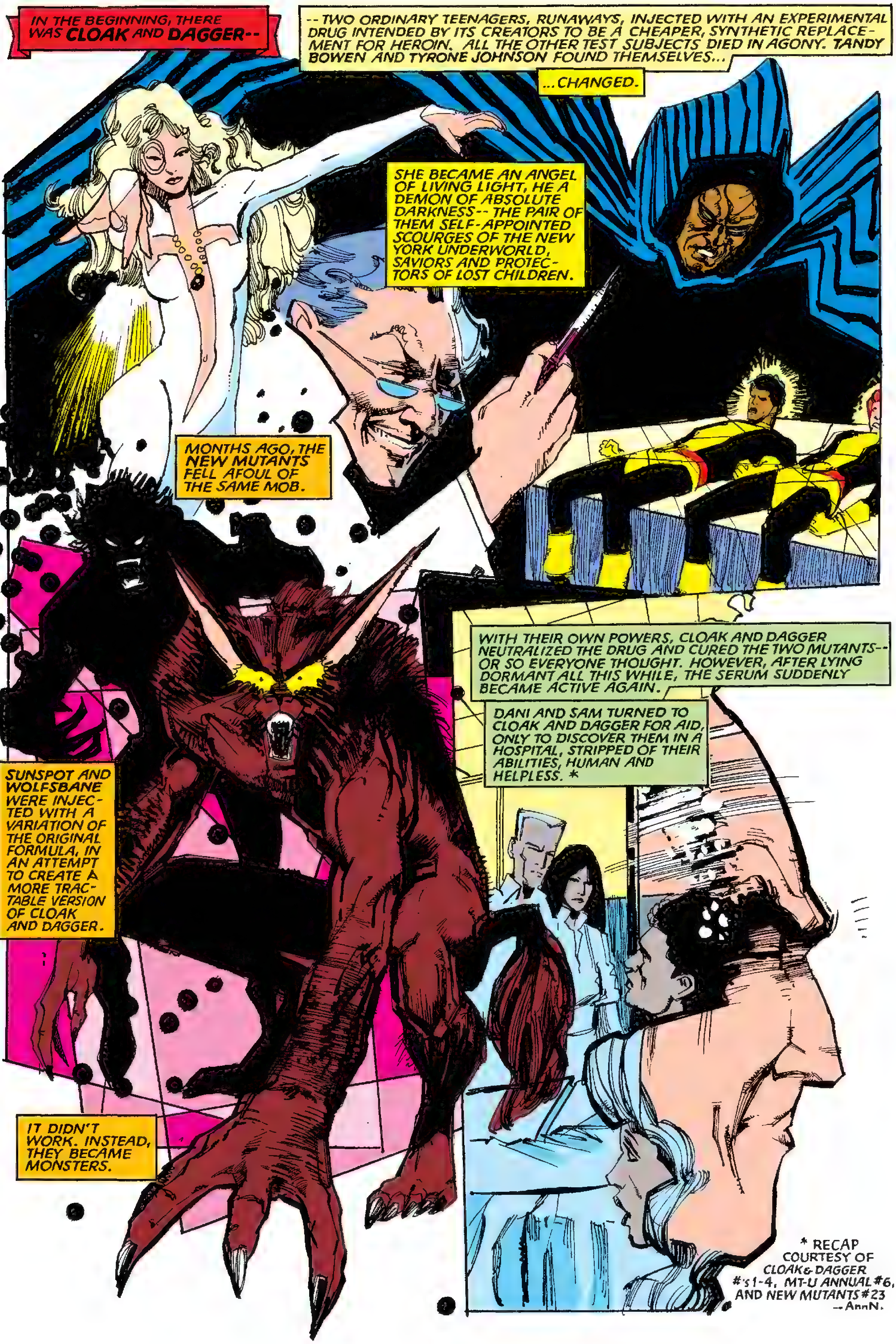

AROUND MOIRA MacTAGGERT, SHADOW CONSUMES THE INFIRMARY, AS IT HAS ALREADY DONE THE BOY BEFORE HER.
HIS NAME IS ROBERTO DaCOSTA -- A FIERY, DEVIL-MAY-CARE SPIRIT WHOSE MUTANT BODY DRAWS FROM THE SUN A SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH THAT FAR BELIES HIS SLIGHT BUILD.
EARLIER TONIGHT, HE INEXPLICABLY WENT BERSERK AND ATTACKED A FELLOW STUDENT AT CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
NOW, PROFESSOR XAVIER HIMSELF LIES UNCONSCIOUS AT HIS HANDS, LEAVING MOIRA TO WONDER WITH BLEAK DESPERATION THAT IF THE GREATEST MUTANT TELEPATH ON EARTH CANNOT STAND AGAINST SUNSPOT...
...WHAT CHANCE HAS SHE?
by CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER & BILL SIENKIEWICZ, ARTIST
GLYNIS WEIN, colorist • ORZECHOWSKI & BUHALIS, letterers • ANN NOCENTI, editor • JIM SHOOTER, chief

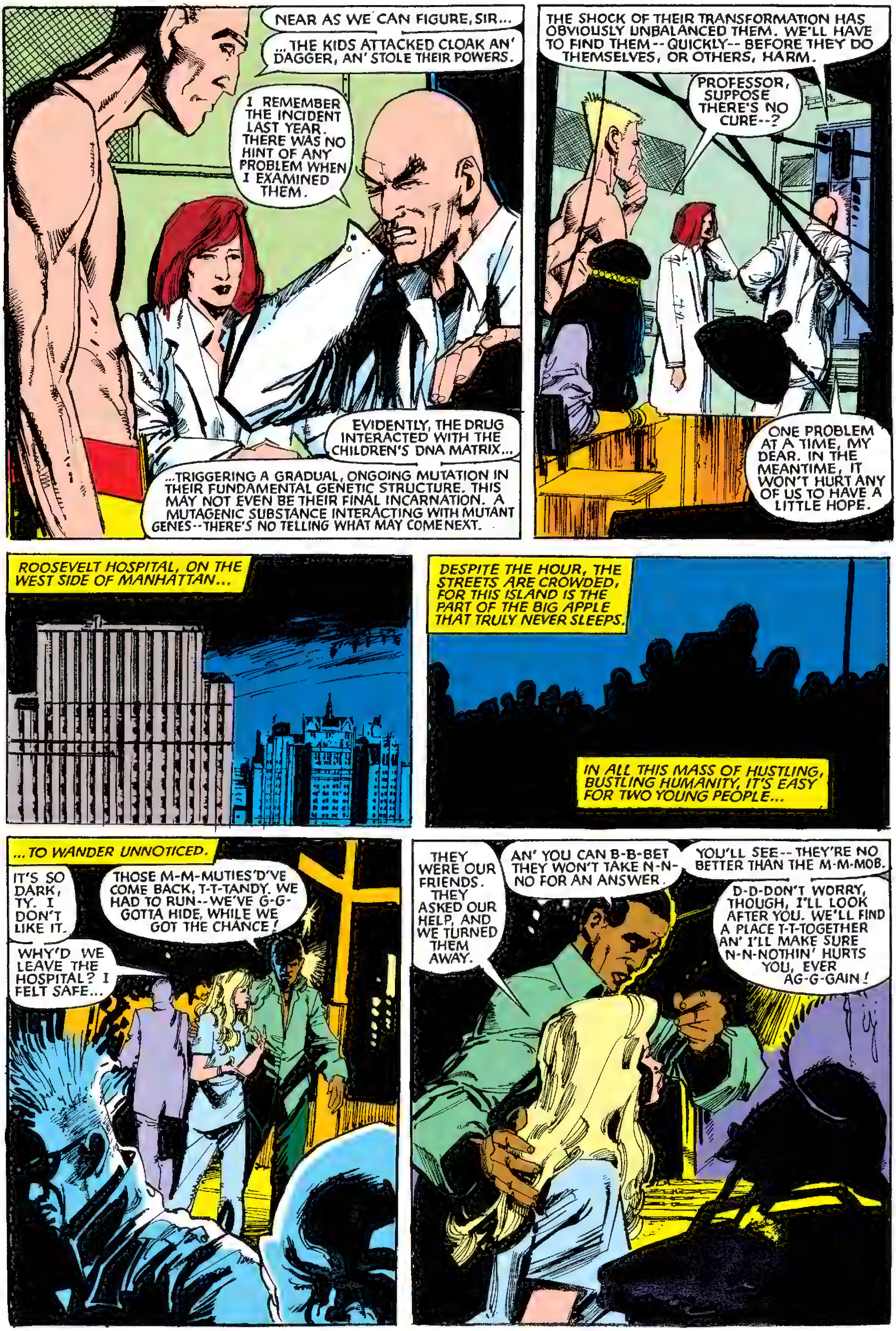

ROB, LAD, DON'T DO THIS. TALK TO ME, I BEG YOU. TELL ME--!
WHAT--HOW I FEEL?!
I HUNGER, LIKE I'VE BEEN HOLLOW INSIDE FROM THE DAY I WAS BORN!
I'M DARK AND COLD AND EMPTY-- AND ONLY LIGHT TAKES AWAY THE PAIN!
BUT WHEN I REACH FOR IT...
...IT SLIPS THROUGH MY FINGERS.
THAT'S A LAUGH, WHAT FINGERS?!
THERE'S NO ME ANYMORE, MOIRA! AND WITHOUT THE LIGHT, THERE NEVER WILL BE, EVER AGAIN!
YOU'RE A DOCTOR-- HELP ME!
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, BUT I HURT!!
YOU LOOK SO BRIGHT, YOUR GLOW PUTS THE STARS TO SHAME.
RUN, Dr. MacTAGGERT-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE-- PLEASE!!!
SHE WANTS TO--
--BUT XAVIER WAS HER FIRST LOVE, AND SHE CARES FOR HIM STILL. SHE WON'T ABANDON HIM.
THEN, WITH ROBERTO'S TOUCH...
...SHE CAN'T.
THE ABYSS GAPES WITHIN HER--ALL LOVE, ALL JOY, ALL HOPE FLEES, REPLACED BY DULL DESPAIR. TEARS-- OF GRIEF AND TERROR--START FROM HER EYES. SHE BEGINS TO FALL TOWARDS WELCOME OBLIVION...
...WHEN SUDDENLY...
'BERTO, WHAT'RE Y' DOING?!

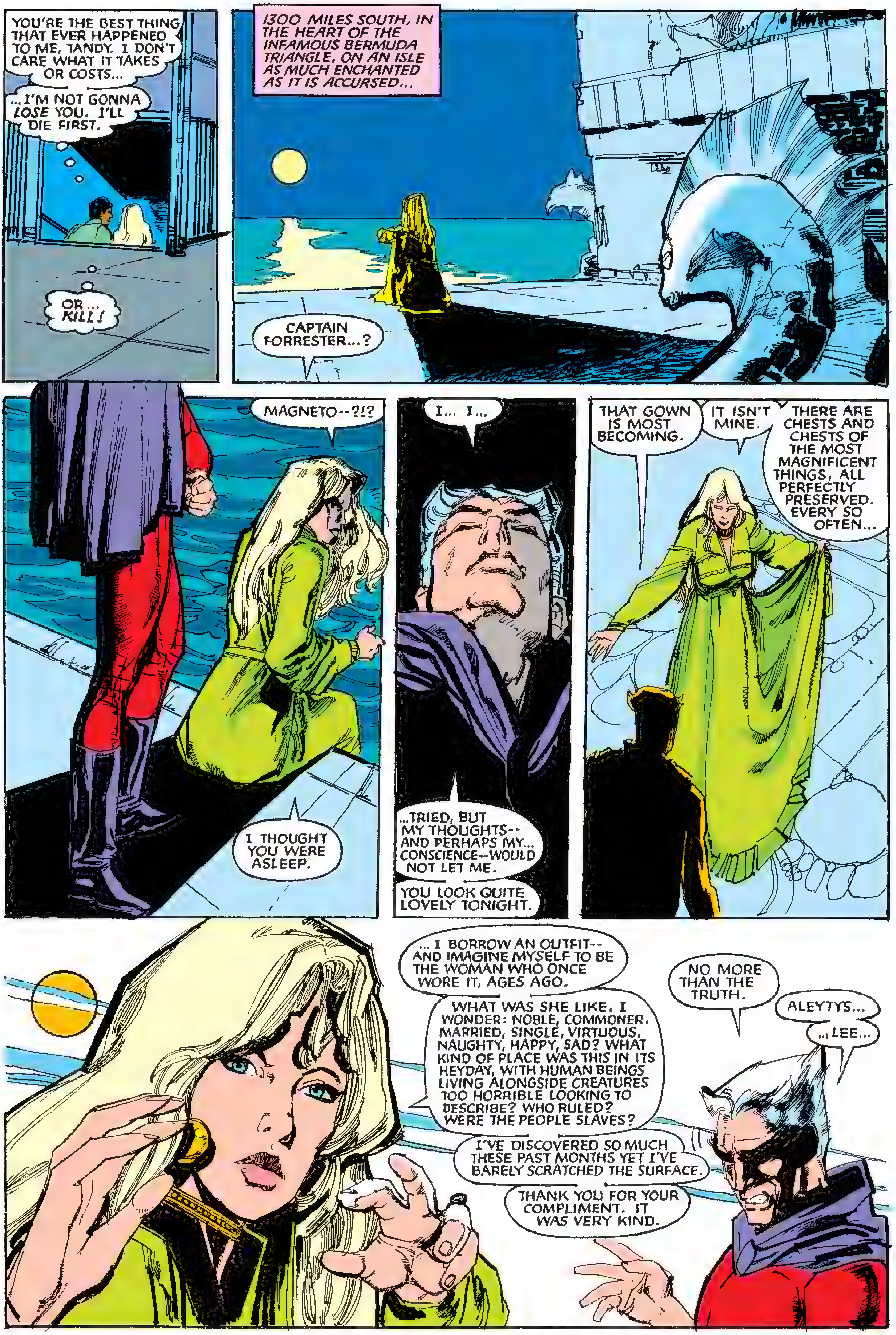

THE *LIGHT!* BLESSED MADONNA, I NEVER DREAMED THERE COULD BE SO *MUCH!*
STAY AWAY FROM HER, CURSE YOU! LEAVE MY CHILD BE!
RAHNE, GET OUT OF HERE! SOUND THE ALARM-- SUMMON THE *X-MEN!!*
THERE'S NO NEED, LADY MOIRA.
I KNOW WHAT HE WANTS.
I FREELY GIVE IT.
TAKE MY LIGHT, 'BERTO...
--LET IT HEAL YOU AND BRING YOU PEACE.
CHARLES-- D'YOU SEE-- SHE'S GLOWING?!
AND HER APPEARANCE--?! THE LASS IS A WEREWOLF--
--WHERE'D THIS NEW INCARNATION COME FROM?!
I... DON'T KNOW.
HER RADIANCE FILLS THE ROOM-- AND THE SHADOW FLEES BEFORE IT. AGAIN, MOIRA FEELS TEARS ON HER CHEEKS, BUT THESE SHE KNOWS ARE OF A SUBLIME, INNOCENT JOY.
RAHNE WAS ALWAYS LOVELY, BUT THE SHY YOUNG HIGHLANDER NEVER BELIEVED IT. THIS, THOUGH, IS HER PROMISE FULFILLED AND MORE, ALMOST AN ANGEL COME TO EARTH.

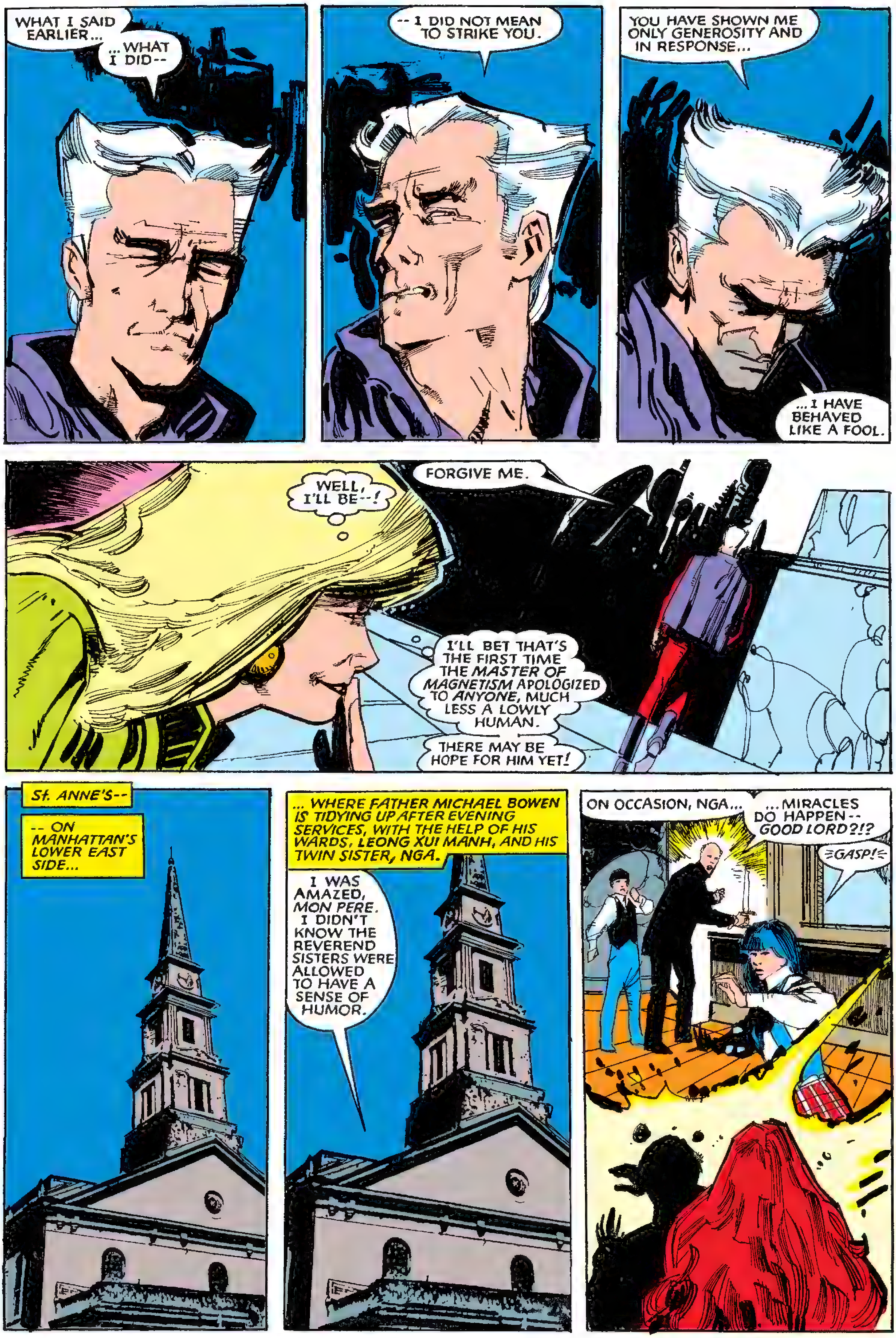

HER EFFECT ON ROBERTO IS NO LESS DRAMATIC.
WHAT... HAPPENED TO ME?!
DEAR LORD FORGIVE ME-- WHAT HAVE I DONE?!!
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, 'BERTO. YOU'RE SAFE NOW, THE DANGER'S PAST.
FOR HOW LONG?!
Oh, RAHNE-- AM I MAD?! IS THIS SOME AWFUL NIGHTMARE?!!
I WISH I COULD LIE AN' TELL YOU IT WAS.
I'M SO S-SCARED!
AS LONG AS WE'RE TOGETHER, YOU'VE NOTHING TO FEAR.
PROFESSOR, ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO?! MAKE ME WELL AGAIN, MAKE ME MYSELF!
BOBBY!?!
RAHNE-- IS THAT YOU?!
SAM, WE'RE TOO LATE!
STAY AWAY, BOTH O' YOU-- YOU'RE SCARING HIM!

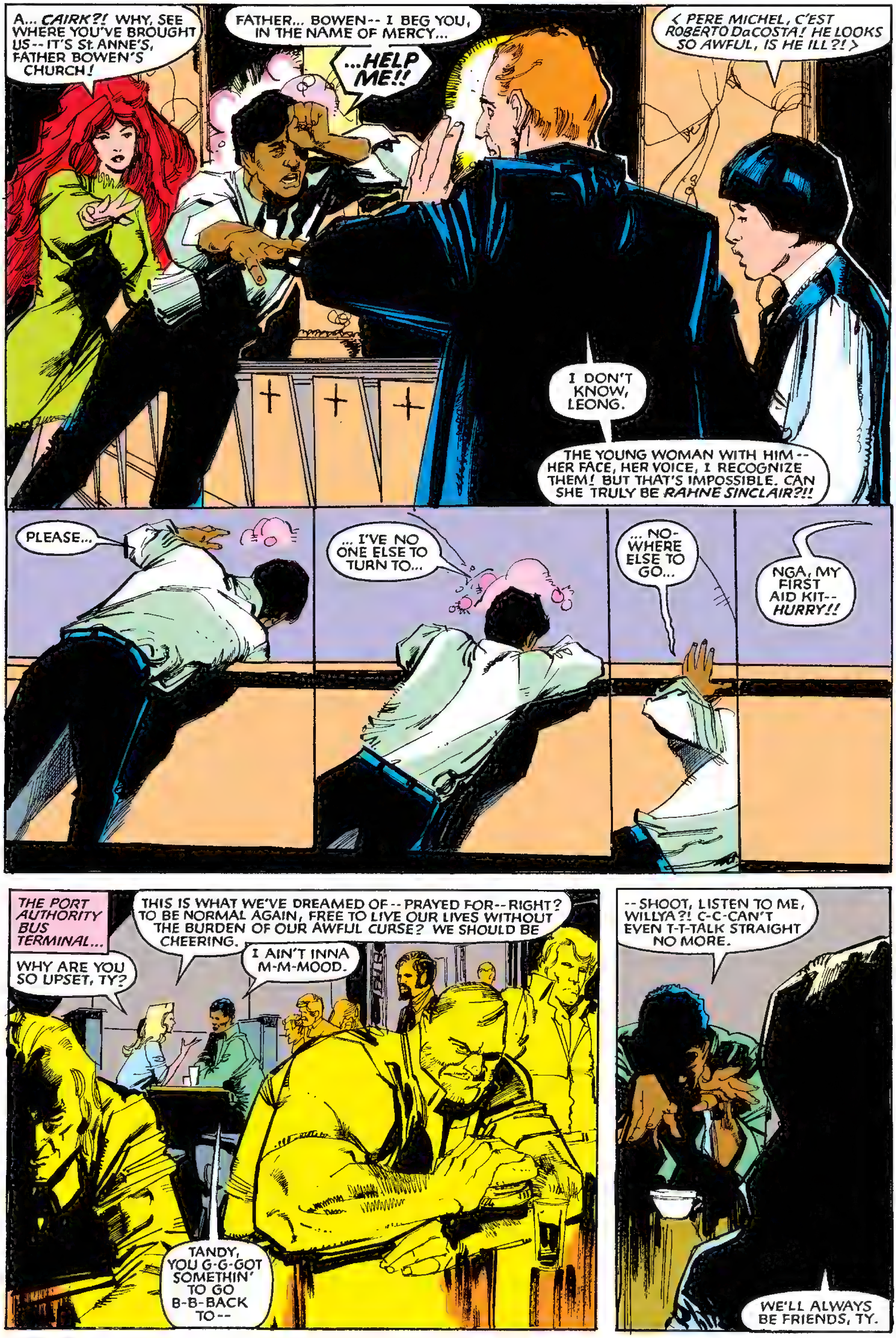

BOBBY-- COOL DOWN, BOY, WE DON'T MEAN YOU ANY HARM!
'BERTO, LISTEN TO HIM! DON'T--!
LEAVE US ALONE, DO YOU HEAR?!
*LEAVE US ALONE!!*
THEY'RE GONE! BOBBY *TELEPORTED*, JUST LIKE CLOAK USED TO.
HE COULD HAVE TAKEN RAHNE ANYWHERE!
HOWEVER'LL WE FIND THEM, SAM?!
SAM, DANIELLE--WHAT THE DEVIL'S GOING ON?! EXPLAIN YUIRSELVES!!
IT'S A HECKUVA STORY, MA'AM. PROFESSOR XAVIER-- YOU OKAY, SIR?!
WELL ENOUGH, BUT THAT ISN'T IMPORTANT.
OPEN YOUR MINDS TO ME.
I WANT TO LEARN EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT RAHNE AND ROBERTO'S AFFLICTION.
COULDN'T WE JUST TELL YOU, SIR?
THAT WOULD TAKE TOO LONG, AND YOU MIGHT UNWITTINGLY OMIT SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR RELUCTANCE, SAM. I DO NOT ASK THIS LIGHTLY.
BUT TWO LIVES-- DEAR TO US-- ARE AT STAKE. WILL YOU ALLOW YOUR FEAR OF MY TELEPATHIC POWER TO CONDEMN THEM?
*EVEN AS XAVIER SPEAKS, HE SENSES THEIR ANSWER--AND IMMEDIATELY REACHES OUT WITH HIS MIND, MAKING HIS STUDENTS' THOUGHTS HIS OWN.*

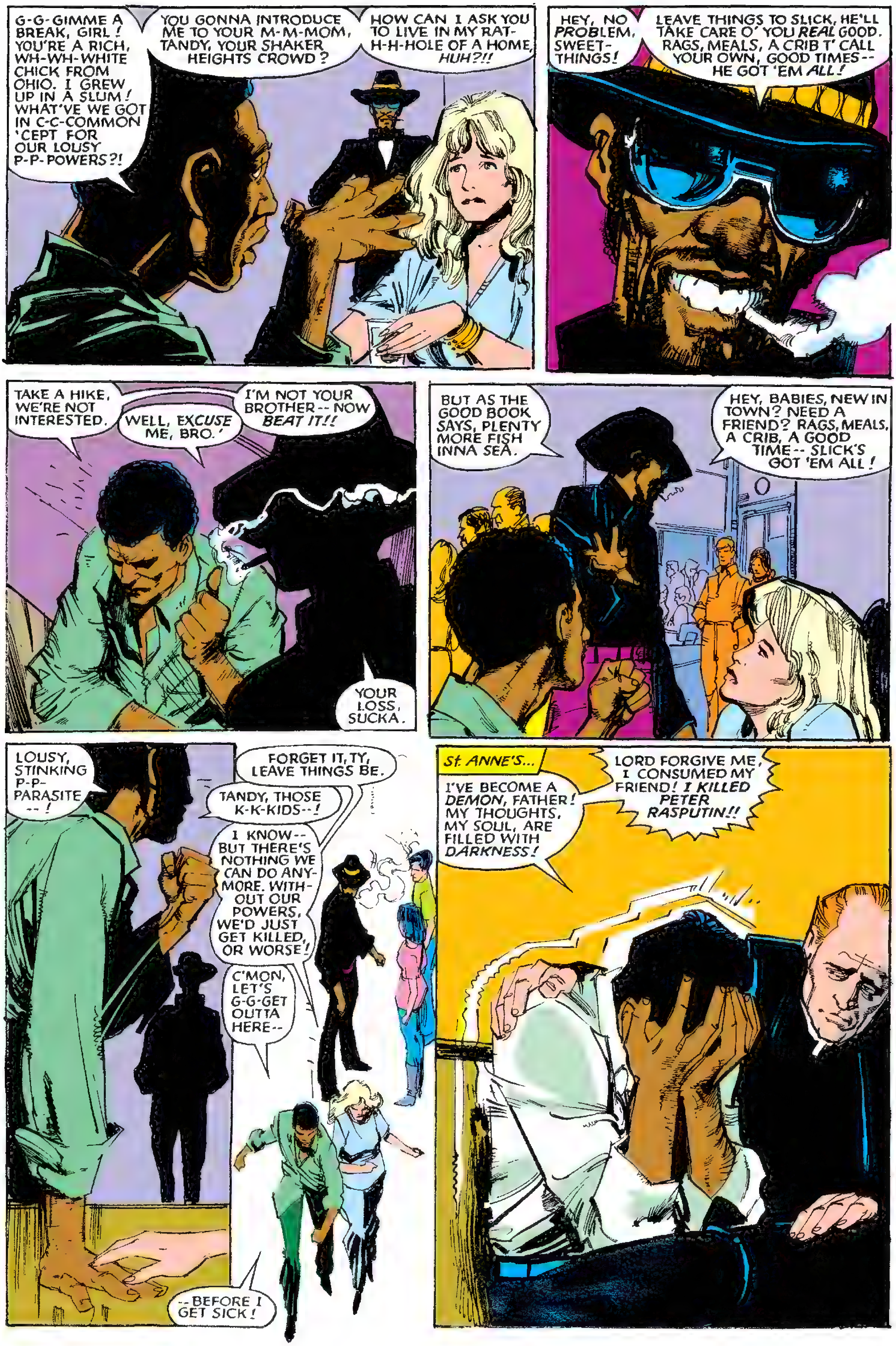

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS CLOAK AND DAGGER--
-- TWO ORDINARY TEENAGERS, RUNAWAYS, INJECTED WITH AN EXPERIMENTAL DRUG INTENDED BY ITS CREATORS TO BE A CHEAPER, SYNTHETIC REPLACEMENT FOR HEROIN. ALL THE OTHER TEST SUBJECTS DIED IN AGONY. TANDY BOWEN AND TYRONE JOHNSON FOUND THEMSELVES...
...CHANGED.
SHE BECAME AN ANGEL OF LIVING LIGHT, HE A DEMON OF ABSOLUTE DARKNESS-- THE PAIR OF THEM SELF-APPOINTED SCOURGES OF THE NEW YORK UNDERWORLD, SAVIORS AND PROTECTORS OF LOST CHILDREN.
MONTHS AGO, THE NEW MUTANTS FELL AFOUL OF THE SAME MOB.
WITH THEIR OWN POWERS, CLOAK AND DAGGER NEUTRALIZED THE DRUG AND CURED THE TWO MUTANTS-- OR SO EVERYONE THOUGHT. HOWEVER, AFTER LYING DORMANT ALL THIS WHILE, THE SERUM SUDDENLY BECAME ACTIVE AGAIN.
DANI AND SAM TURNED TO CLOAK AND DAGGER FOR AID, ONLY TO DISCOVER THEM IN A HOSPITAL, STRIPPED OF THEIR ABILITIES, HUMAN AND HELPLESS. *
SUNSPOT AND WOLFSBANE WERE INJECTED WITH A VARIATION OF THE ORIGINAL FORMULA, IN AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A MORE TRACTABLE VERSION OF CLOAK AND DAGGER.
IT DIDN'T WORK. INSTEAD, THEY BECAME MONSTERS.
* RECAP COURTESY OF CLOAK & DAGGER #'s 1-4, MT-U ANNUAL #6, AND NEW MUTANTS #23 --AnnN.

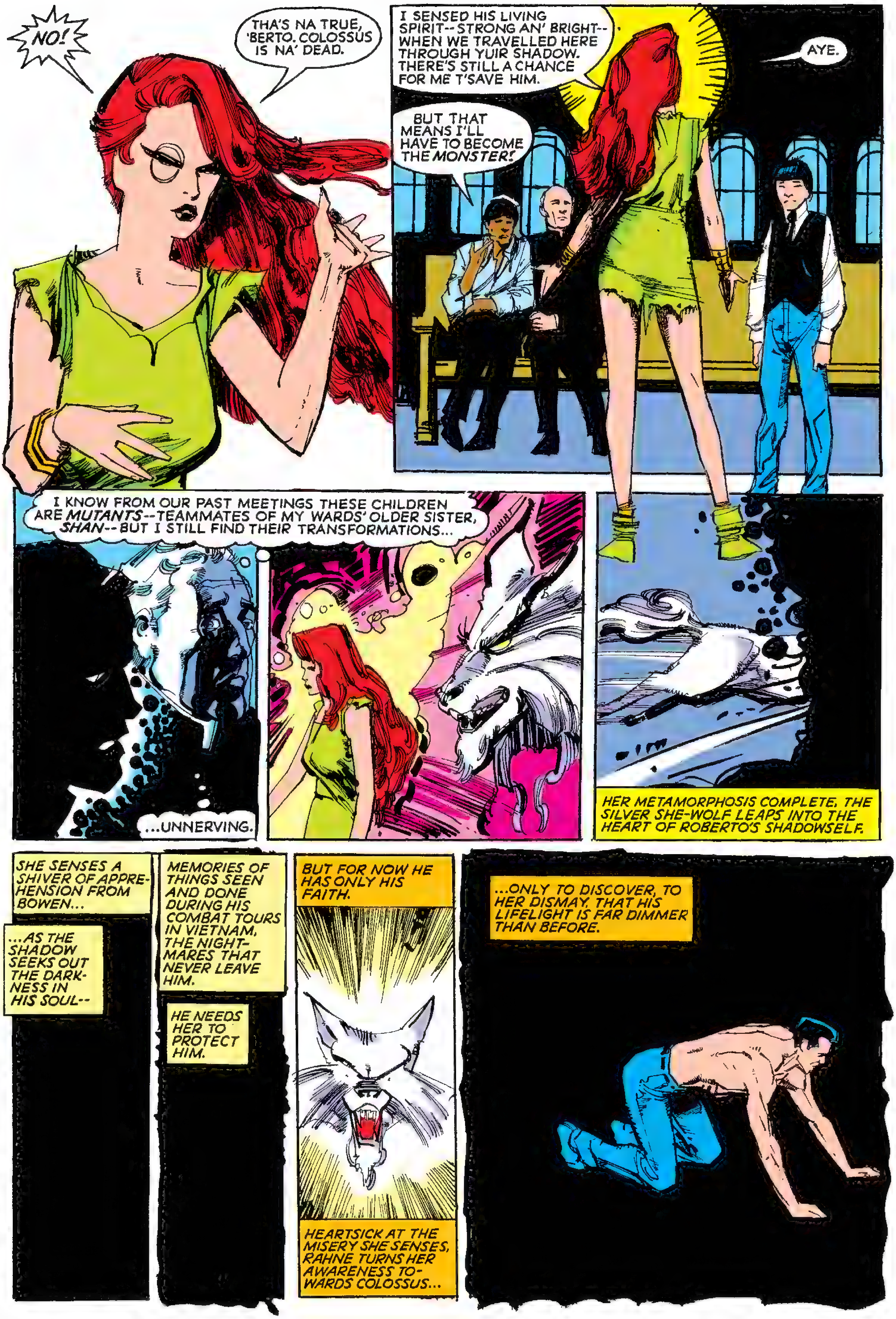

NEAR AS WE CAN FIGURE, SIR...
...THE KIDS ATTACKED CLOAK AN' DAGGER, AN' STOLE THEIR POWERS.
I REMEMBER THE INCIDENT LAST YEAR. THERE WAS NO HINT OF ANY PROBLEM WHEN I EXAMINED THEM.
EVIDENTLY, THE DRUG INTERACTED WITH THE CHILDREN'S DNA MATRIX...
...TRIGGERING A GRADUAL, ONGOING MUTATION IN THEIR FUNDAMENTAL GENETIC STRUCTURE. THIS MAY NOT EVEN BE THEIR FINAL INCARNATION. A MUTAGENIC SUBSTANCE INTERACTING WITH MUTANT GENES--THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT MAY COME NEXT.
THE SHOCK OF THEIR TRANSFORMATION HAS OBVIOUSLY UNBALANCED THEM. WE'LL HAVE TO FIND THEM--QUICKLY--BEFORE THEY DO THEMSELVES, OR OTHERS, HARM.
PROFESSOR, SUPPOSE THERE'S NO CURE--?
ONE PROBLEM AT A TIME, MY DEAR. IN THE MEANTIME, IT WON'T HURT ANY OF US TO HAVE A LITTLE HOPE.
ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL, ON THE WEST SIDE OF MANHATTAN...
DESPITE THE HOUR, THE STREETS ARE CROWDED, FOR THIS ISLAND IS THE PART OF THE BIG APPLE THAT TRULY NEVER SLEEPS.
IN ALL THIS MASS OF HUSTLING, BUSTLING HUMANITY, IT'S EASY FOR TWO YOUNG PEOPLE...
...TO WANDER UNNOTICED.
IT'S SO DARK, TY. I DON'T LIKE IT.
THOSE M-M-MUTIES'D'VE COME BACK, T-T-TANDY. WE HAD TO RUN--WE'VE G-G-GOTTA HIDE, WHILE WE GOT THE CHANCE!
WHY'D WE LEAVE THE HOSPITAL? I FELT SAFE...
THEY WERE OUR FRIENDS. THEY ASKED OUR HELP, AND WE TURNED THEM AWAY.
AN' YOU CAN B-B-BET THEY WON'T TAKE N-N-NO FOR AN ANSWER.
YOU'LL SEE--THEY'RE NO BETTER THAN THE M-M-MOB.
D-D-DON'T WORRY, THOUGH, I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU. WE'LL FIND A PLACE T-T-TOGETHER AN' I'LL MAKE SURE N-N-NOTHIN' HURTS YOU, EVER AG-G-GAIN!

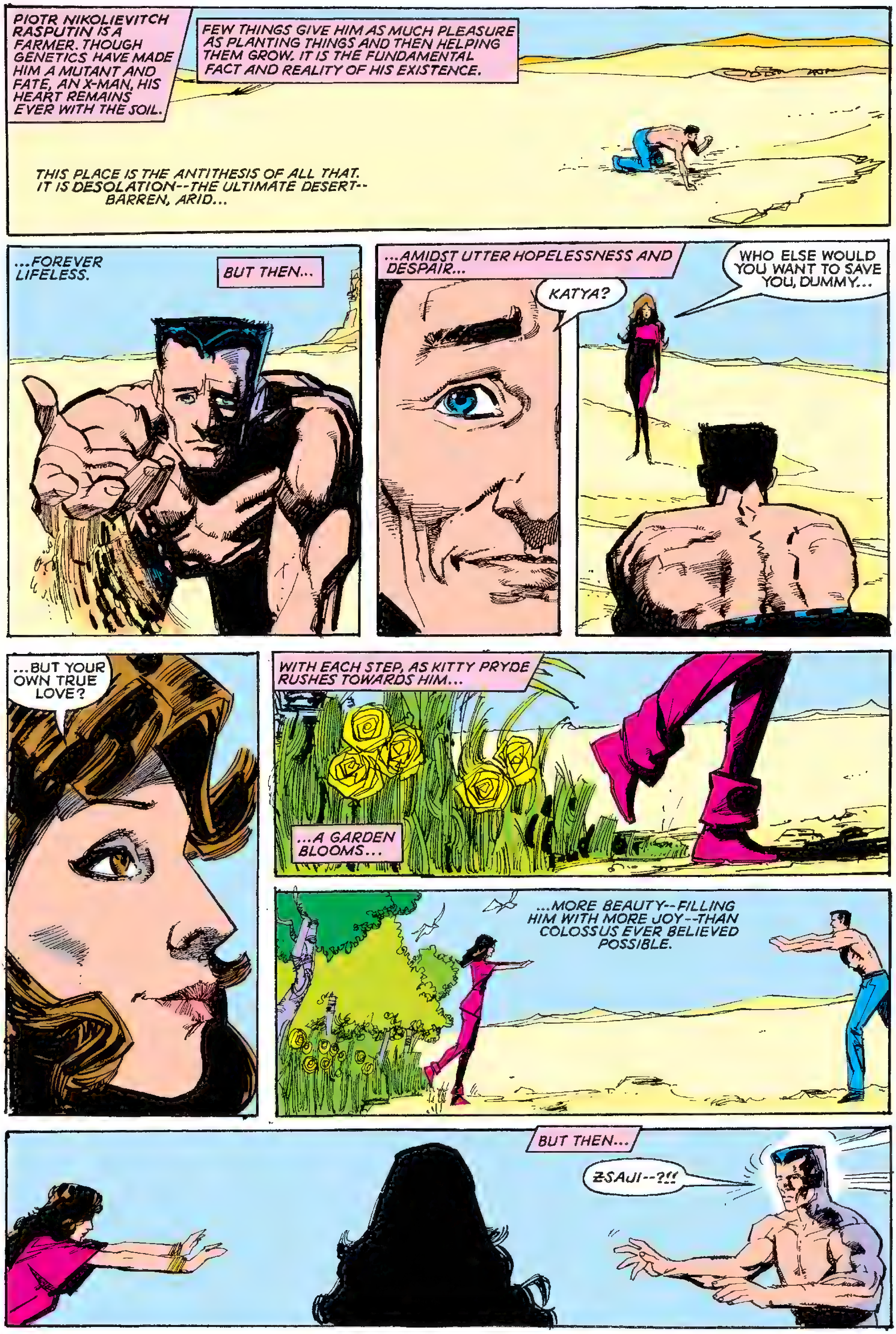

YOU'RE THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME, TANDY. I DON'T CARE WHAT IT TAKES OR COSTS...
...I'M NOT GONNA *LOSE* YOU. I'LL DIE FIRST.
OR... *KILL!*
*1300 MILES SOUTH, IN THE HEART OF THE INFAMOUS BERMUDA TRIANGLE, ON AN ISLE AS MUCH ENCHANTED AS IT IS ACCURSED...*
CAPTAIN FORRESTER...?
MAGNETO--?!?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ASLEEP.
I... I...
...TRIED, BUT MY THOUGHTS--AND PERHAPS MY... CONSCIENCE--WOULD NOT LET ME.
YOU LOOK QUITE LOVELY TONIGHT.
THAT GOWN IS MOST BECOMING.
IT ISN'T MINE.
THERE ARE CHESTS AND CHESTS OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT THINGS, ALL PERFECTLY PRESERVED. EVERY SO OFTEN...
... I BORROW AN OUTFIT--AND IMAGINE MYSELF TO BE THE WOMAN WHO ONCE WORE IT, AGES AGO.
WHAT WAS SHE LIKE, I WONDER: NOBLE, COMMONER, MARRIED, SINGLE, VIRTUOUS, NAUGHTY, HAPPY, SAD? WHAT KIND OF PLACE WAS THIS IN ITS HEYDAY, WITH HUMAN BEINGS LIVING ALONGSIDE CREATURES TOO HORRIBLE LOOKING TO DESCRIBE? WHO RULED? WERE THE PEOPLE SLAVES?
I'VE DISCOVERED SO MUCH THESE PAST MONTHS YET I'VE BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMPLIMENT. IT WAS VERY KIND.
NO MORE THAN THE TRUTH.
ALEYTYS...
...LEE...

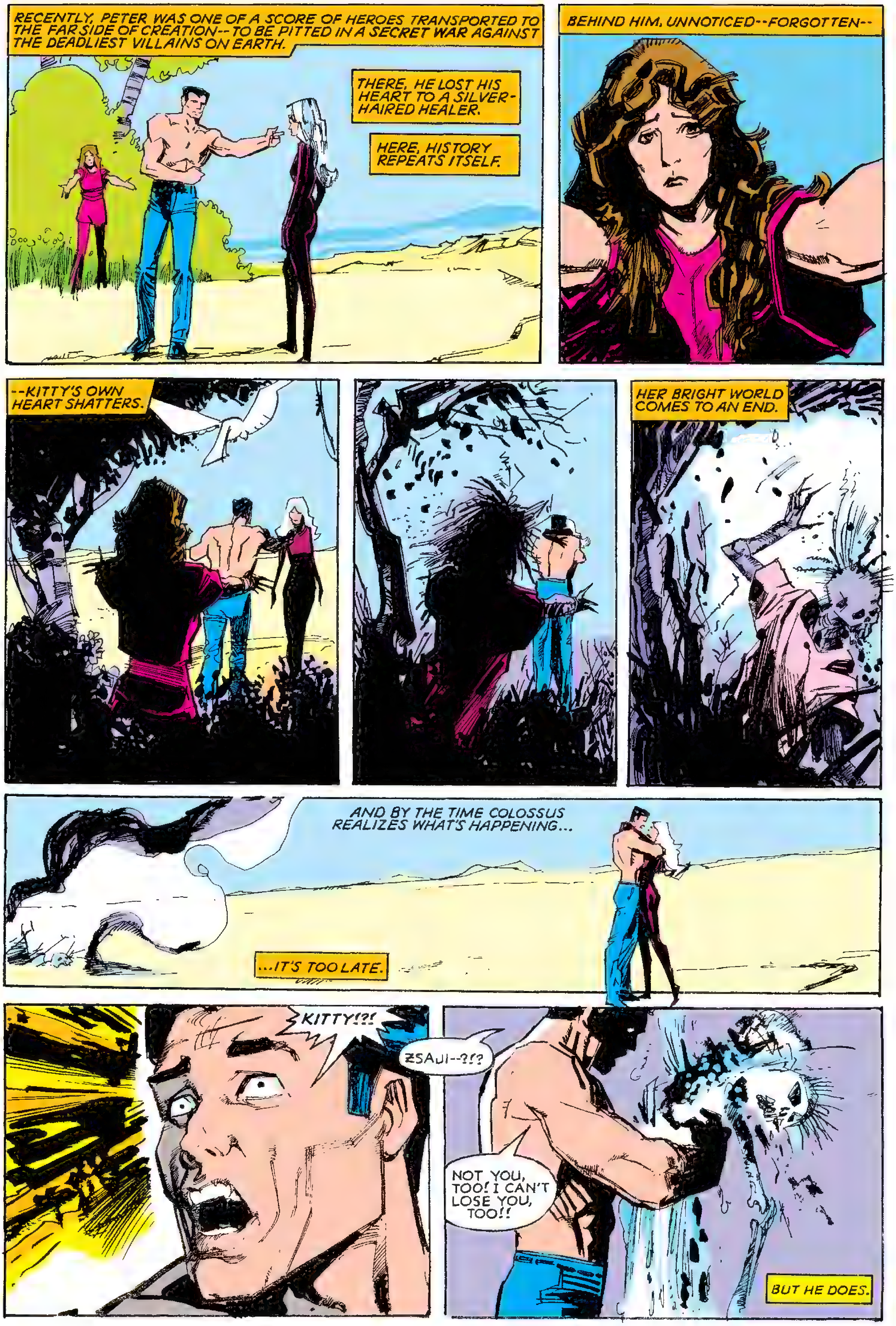

WHAT I SAID EARLIER...
...WHAT I DID--
-- I DID NOT MEAN TO STRIKE YOU.
YOU HAVE SHOWN ME ONLY GENEROSITY AND IN RESPONSE...
...I HAVE BEHAVED LIKE A FOOL.
WELL, I'LL BE--!
FORGIVE ME.
I'LL BET THAT'S THE FIRST TIME THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM APOLOGIZED TO ANYONE, MUCH LESS A LOWLY HUMAN.
THERE MAY BE HOPE FOR HIM YET!
St. ANNE'S--
-- ON MANHATTAN'S LOWER EAST SIDE...
... WHERE FATHER MICHAEL BOWEN IS TIDYING UP AFTER EVENING SERVICES, WITH THE HELP OF HIS WARDS, LEONG XUI MANH, AND HIS TWIN SISTER, NGA.
I WAS AMAZED, MON PERE. I DIDN'T KNOW THE REVEREND SISTERS WERE ALLOWED TO HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.
ON OCCASION, NGA...
...MIRACLES DO HAPPEN-- GOOD LORD?!?
GASP!

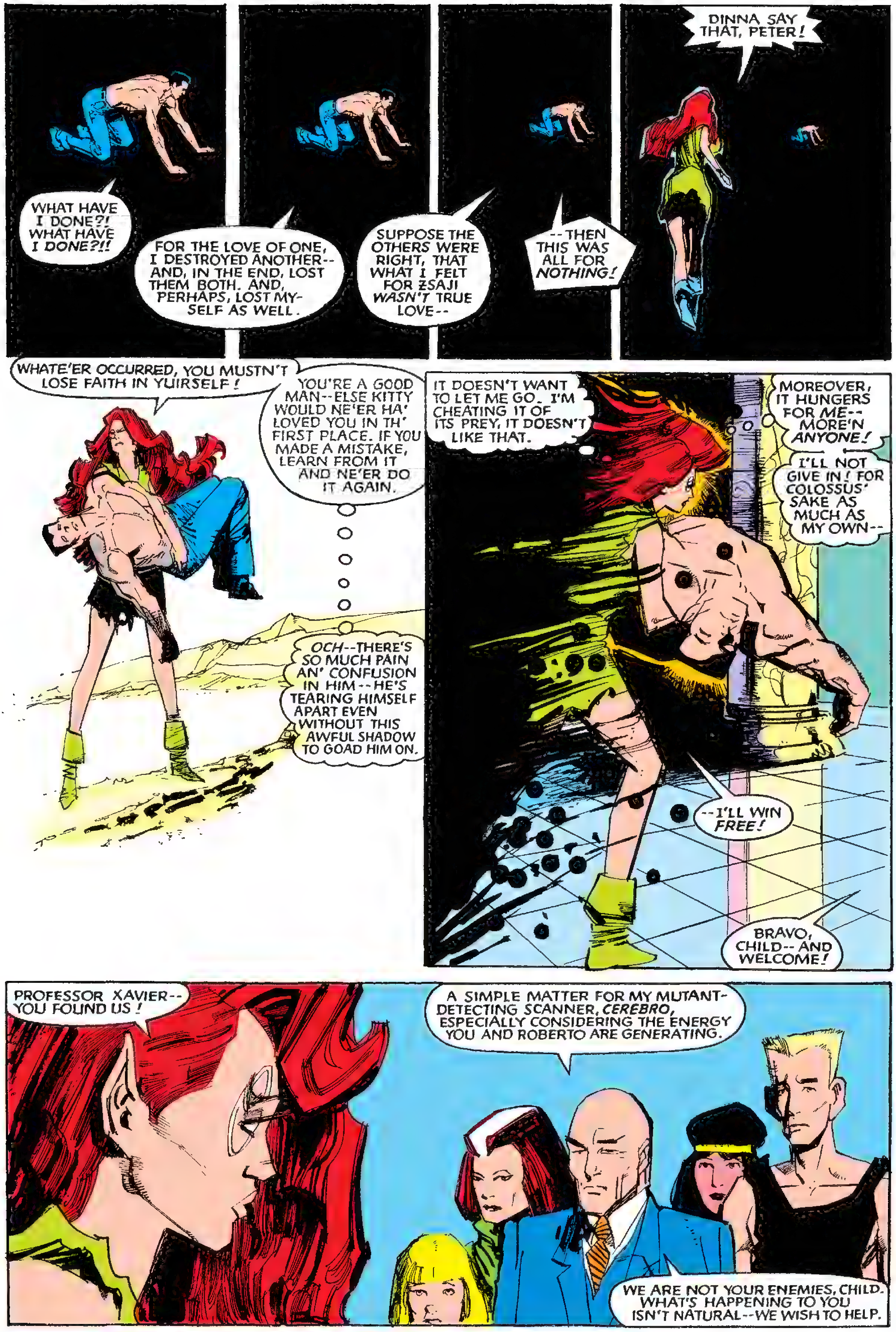

A... *CAIRK?!* WHY, SEE WHERE YOU'VE BROUGHT US -- IT'S St. ANNE'S, FATHER BOWEN'S CHURCH!
FATHER... BOWEN -- I BEG YOU, IN THE NAME OF MERCY...
**...HELP ME!!**
*< PERE MICHEL, C'EST ROBERTO DaCOSTA! HE LOOKS SO AWFUL, IS HE ILL?! >*
I DON'T KNOW, LEONG.
THE YOUNG WOMAN WITH HIM -- HER FACE, HER VOICE, I RECOGNIZE THEM! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. CAN SHE TRULY BE *RAHNE SINCLAIR?!!*
PLEASE...
... I'VE NO ONE ELSE TO TURN TO...
... NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...
NGA, MY FIRST AID KIT -- *HURRY!!*
*THE PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL...*
WHY ARE YOU SO UPSET, TY?
THIS IS WHAT WE'VE DREAMED OF -- PRAYED FOR -- RIGHT? TO BE NORMAL AGAIN, FREE TO LIVE OUR LIVES WITHOUT THE BURDEN OF OUR AWFUL CURSE? WE SHOULD BE CHEERING.
I AIN'T INNA M-M-MOOD.
TANDY, YOU G-G-GOT SOMETHIN' TO GO B-B-BACK TO --
-- SHOOT, LISTEN TO ME, WILLYA?! C-C-CAN'T EVEN T-T-TALK STRAIGHT NO MORE.
WE'LL ALWAYS BE FRIENDS, TY.

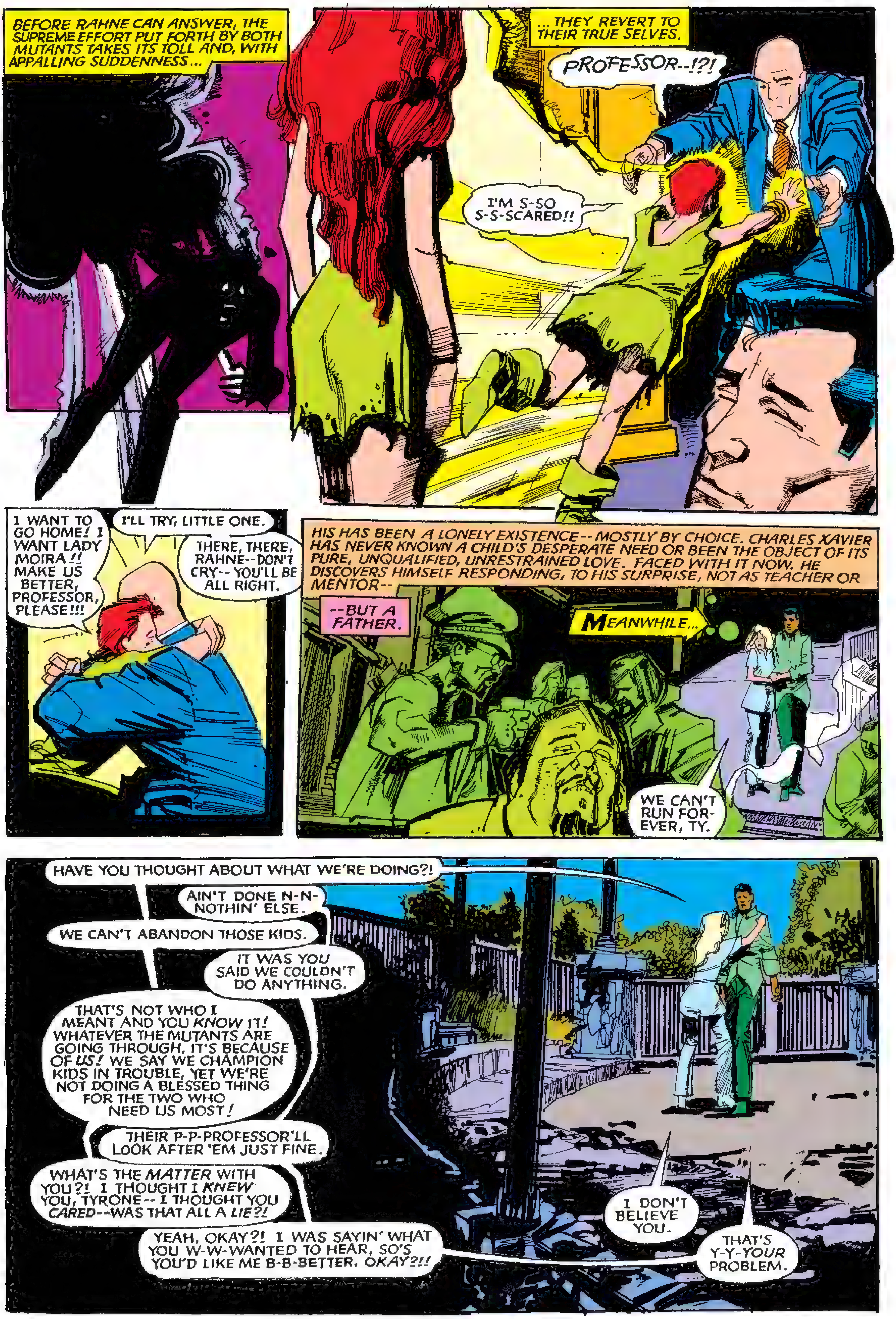

G-G-GIMME A BREAK, GIRL! YOU'RE A RICH, WH-WH-WHITE CHICK FROM OHIO. I GREW UP IN A SLUM! WHAT'VE WE GOT IN C-C-COMMON 'CEPT FOR OUR LOUSY P-P-POWERS?!
YOU GONNA INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR M-M-MOM, TANDY, YOUR SHAKER HEIGHTS CROWD?
HOW CAN I ASK YOU TO LIVE IN MY RAT-H-H-HOLE OF A HOME, HUH?!!
HEY, NO PROBLEM, SWEET-THINGS!
LEAVE THINGS TO SLICK, HE'LL TAKE CARE O' YOU REAL GOOD. RAGS, MEALS, A CRIB T' CALL YOUR OWN, GOOD TIMES-- HE GOT 'EM ALL!
TAKE A HIKE, WE'RE NOT INTERESTED.
WELL, EXCUSE ME, BRO.'
I'M NOT YOUR BROTHER -- NOW BEAT IT!!
YOUR LOSS, SUCKA.
BUT AS THE GOOD BOOK SAYS, PLENTY MORE FISH INNA SEA.
HEY, BABIES, NEW IN TOWN? NEED A FRIEND? RAGS, MEALS, A CRIB, A GOOD TIME -- SLICK'S GOT 'EM ALL!
LOUSY, STINKING P-P-PARASITE --!
FORGET IT, TY, LEAVE THINGS BE.
TANDY, THOSE K-K-KIDS--!
I KNOW-- BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ANYMORE. WITHOUT OUR POWERS, WE'D JUST GET KILLED, OR WORSE!
C'MON, LET'S G-G-GET OUTTA HERE--
--BEFORE I GET SICK!
St. ANNE'S...
I'VE BECOME A DEMON, FATHER! MY THOUGHTS, MY SOUL, ARE FILLED WITH DARKNESS!
LORD FORGIVE ME, I CONSUMED MY FRIEND! I KILLED PETER RASPUTIN!!

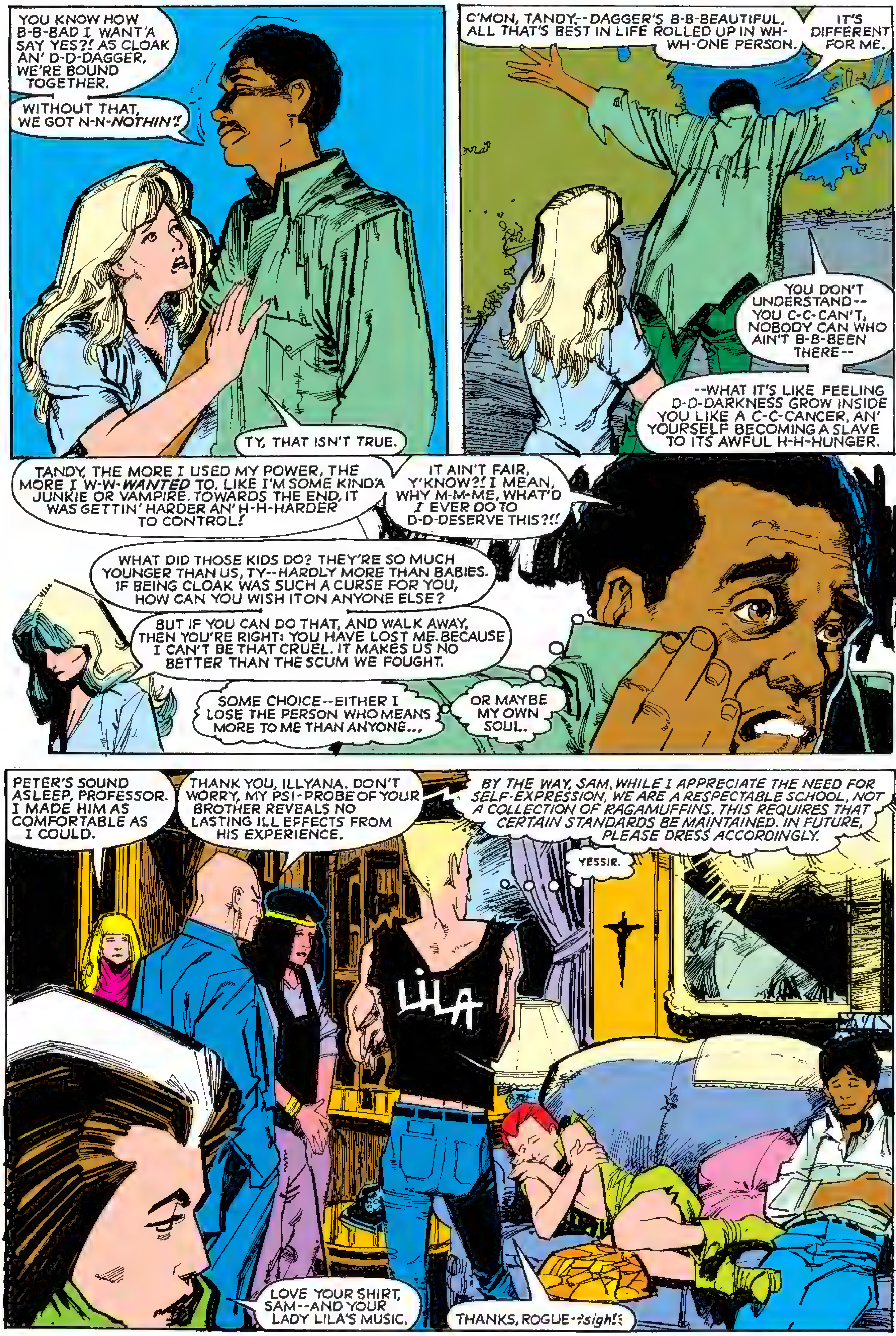

NO!
THA'S NA TRUE, 'BERTO. COLOSSUS IS NA' DEAD.
I SENSED HIS LIVING SPIRIT--STRONG AN' BRIGHT--WHEN WE TRAVELLED HERE THROUGH YUIR SHADOW. THERE'S STILL A CHANCE FOR ME T'SAVE HIM.
AYE.
BUT THAT MEANS I'LL HAVE TO BECOME THE *MONSTER!*
I KNOW FROM OUR PAST MEETINGS THESE CHILDREN ARE *MUTANTS*--TEAMMATES OF MY WARDS' OLDER SISTER, *SHAN*--BUT I STILL FIND THEIR TRANSFORMATIONS...
...UNNERVING.
HER METAMORPHOSIS COMPLETE, THE SILVER SHE-WOLF LEAPS INTO THE HEART OF ROBERTO'S SHADOWSELF.
SHE SENSES A SHIVER OF APPREHENSION FROM BOWEN...
...AS THE SHADOW SEEKS OUT THE DARKNESS IN HIS SOUL--
MEMORIES OF THINGS SEEN AND DONE DURING HIS COMBAT TOURS IN VIETNAM, THE NIGHTMARES THAT NEVER LEAVE HIM.
HE NEEDS HER TO PROTECT HIM.
BUT FOR NOW HE HAS ONLY HIS FAITH.
HEARTSICK AT THE MISERY SHE SENSES, RAHNE TURNS HER AWARENESS TOWARDS COLOSSUS...
...ONLY TO DISCOVER, TO HER DISMAY, THAT HIS LIFELIGHT IS FAR DIMMER THAN BEFORE.

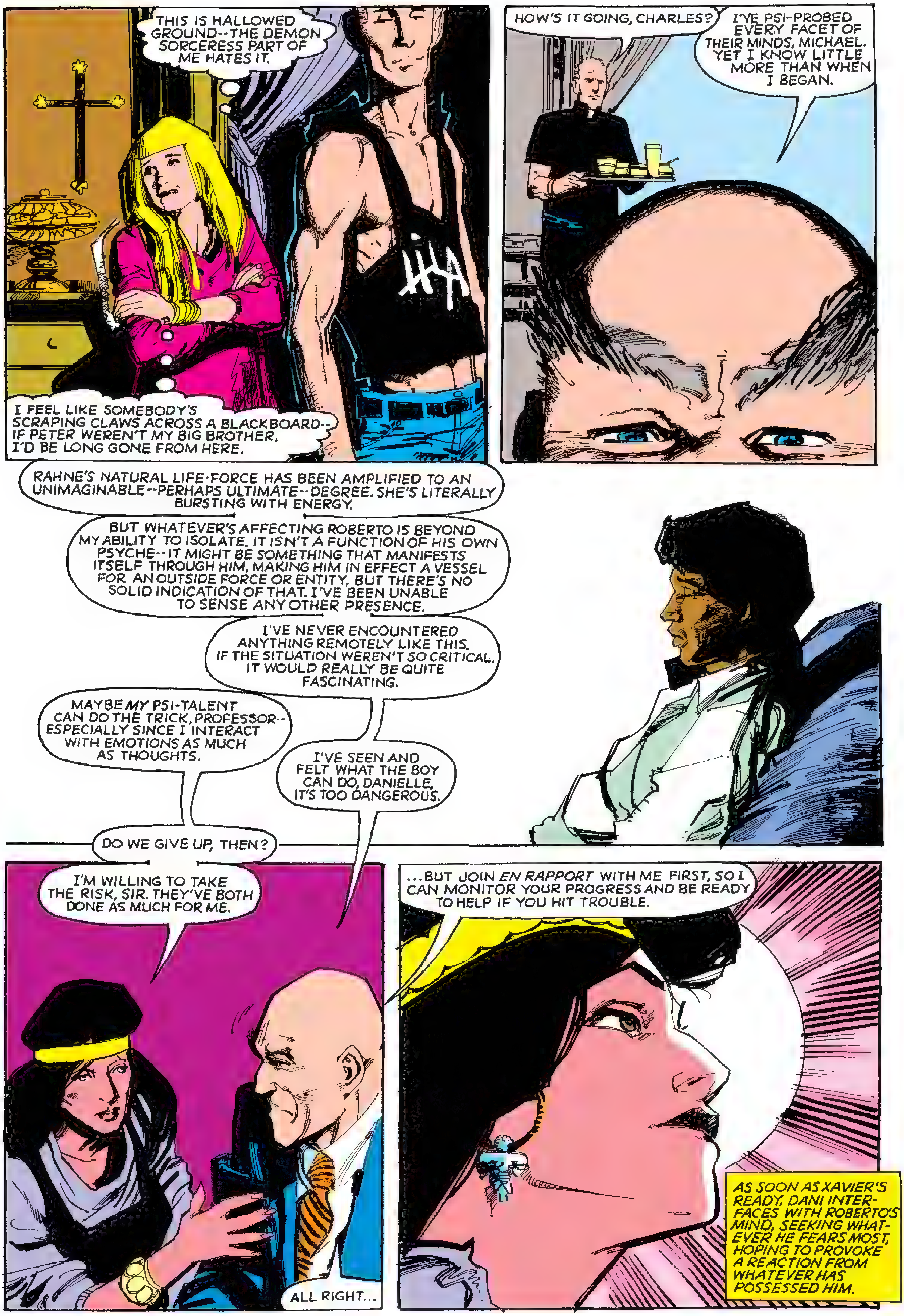

PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH RASPUTIN IS A FARMER. THOUGH GENETICS HAVE MADE HIM A MUTANT AND FATE, AN X-MAN, HIS HEART REMAINS EVER WITH THE SOIL.
FEW THINGS GIVE HIM AS MUCH PLEASURE AS PLANTING THINGS AND THEN HELPING THEM GROW. IT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT AND REALITY OF HIS EXISTENCE.
THIS PLACE IS THE ANTITHESIS OF ALL THAT. IT IS DESOLATION--THE ULTIMATE DESERT-- BARREN, ARID...
...FOREVER LIFELESS.
BUT THEN...
...AMIDST UTTER HOPELESSNESS AND DESPAIR...
KATYA?
WHO ELSE WOULD YOU WANT TO SAVE YOU, DUMMY...
...BUT YOUR OWN TRUE LOVE?
WITH EACH STEP, AS KITTY PRYDE RUSHES TOWARDS HIM...
...A GARDEN BLOOMS...
...MORE BEAUTY--FILLING HIM WITH MORE JOY--THAN COLOSSUS EVER BELIEVED POSSIBLE.
BUT THEN...
ZSAJI--?!!

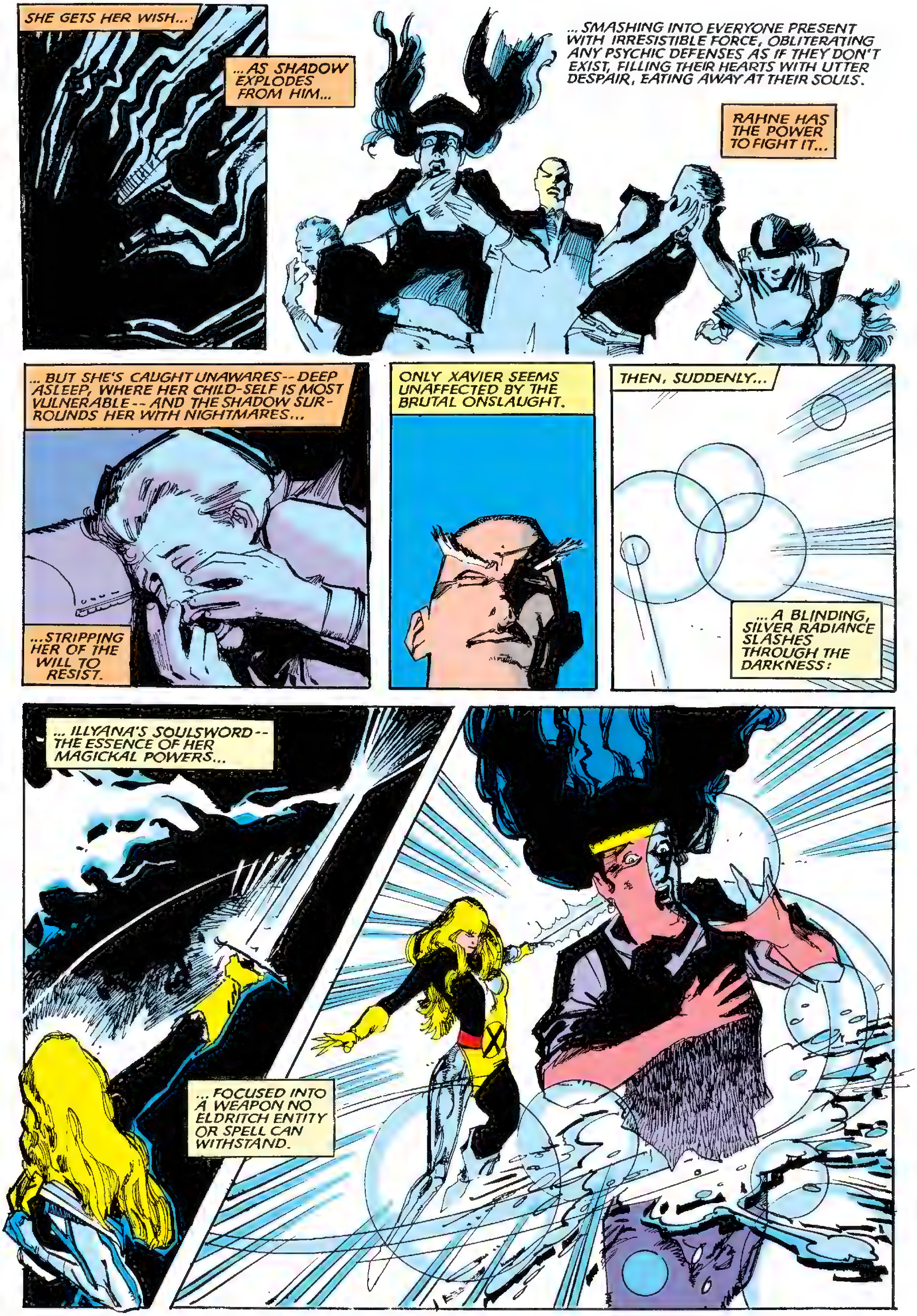

RECENTLY, PETER WAS ONE OF A SCORE OF HEROES TRANSPORTED TO THE FAR SIDE OF CREATION--TO BE PITTED IN A SECRET WAR AGAINST THE DEADLIEST VILLAINS ON EARTH.
THERE, HE LOST HIS HEART TO A SILVER-HAIRED HEALER.
HERE, HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.
BEHIND HIM, UNNOTICED--FORGOTTEN--
--KITTY'S OWN HEART SHATTERS.
HER BRIGHT WORLD COMES TO AN END.
AND BY THE TIME COLOSSUS REALIZES WHAT'S HAPPENING...
...IT'S TOO LATE.
KITTY!?!
ZSAJI--?!?
NOT YOU, TOO! I CAN'T LOSE YOU, TOO!!
BUT HE DOES.

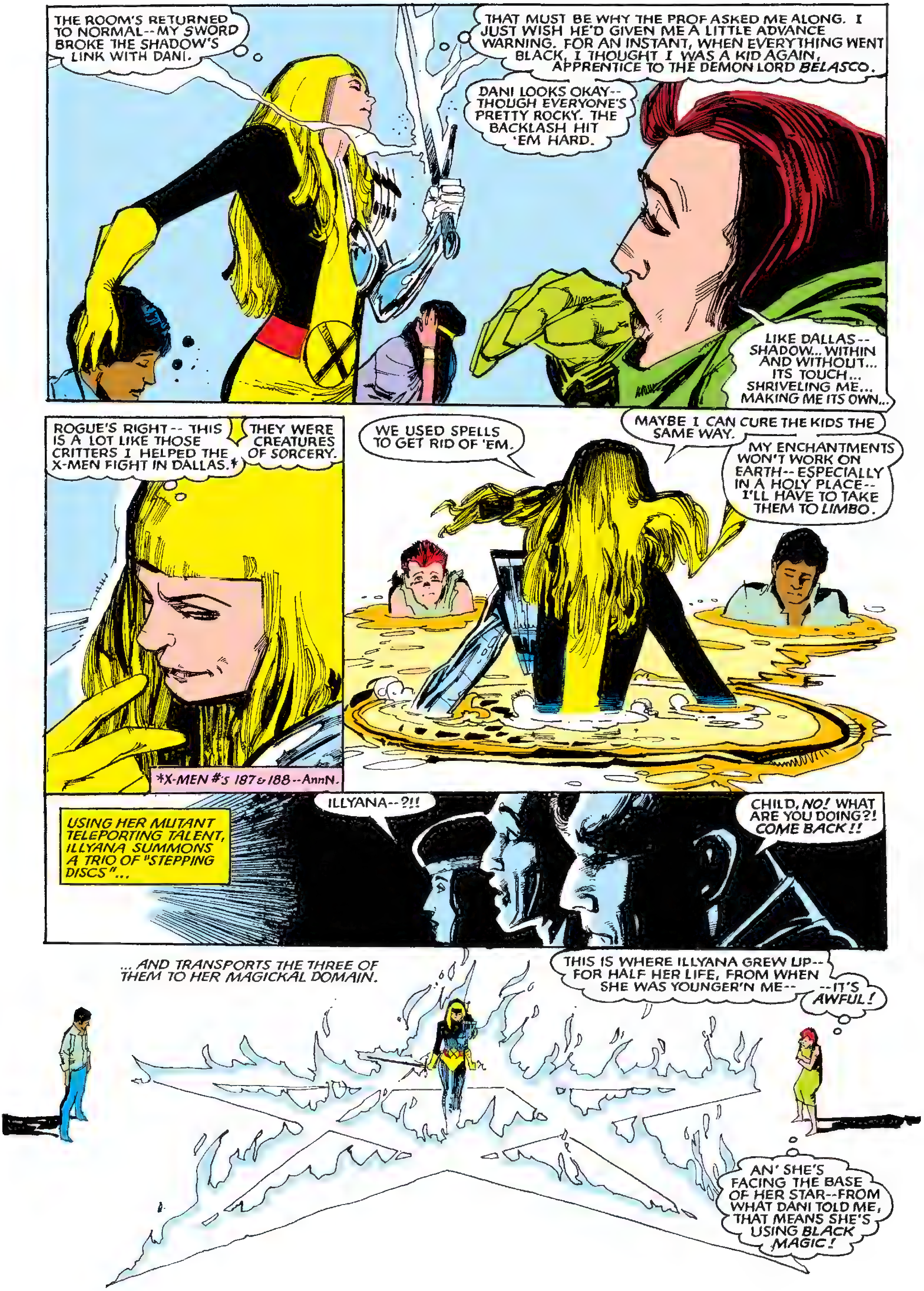

WHAT HAVE I DONE?! WHAT HAVE I DONE?!!
FOR THE LOVE OF ONE, I DESTROYED ANOTHER-- AND, IN THE END, LOST THEM BOTH. AND, PERHAPS, LOST MYSELF AS WELL.
SUPPOSE THE OTHERS WERE RIGHT, THAT WHAT I FELT FOR ZSAJI WASN'T TRUE LOVE--
--THEN THIS WAS ALL FOR NOTHING!
DINNA SAY THAT, PETER!
WHATE'ER OCCURRED, YOU MUSTN'T LOSE FAITH IN YUIRSELF!
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN--ELSE KITTY WOULD NE'ER HA' LOVED YOU IN TH' FIRST PLACE. IF YOU MADE A MISTAKE, LEARN FROM IT AND NE'ER DO IT AGAIN.
OCH--THERE'S SO MUCH PAIN AN' CONFUSION IN HIM--HE'S TEARING HIMSELF APART EVEN WITHOUT THIS AWFUL SHADOW TO GOAD HIM ON.
IT DOESN'T WANT TO LET ME GO. I'M CHEATING IT OF ITS PREY. IT DOESN'T LIKE THAT.
MOREOVER, IT HUNGERS FOR ME-- MORE'N ANYONE!
I'LL NOT GIVE IN! FOR COLOSSUS' SAKE AS MUCH AS MY OWN--
--I'LL WIN FREE!
BRAVO, CHILD-- AND WELCOME!
PROFESSOR XAVIER-- YOU FOUND US!
A SIMPLE MATTER FOR MY MUTANT-DETECTING SCANNER, CEREBRO, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE ENERGY YOU AND ROBERTO ARE GENERATING.
WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMIES, CHILD. WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU ISN'T NATURAL--WE WISH TO HELP.


BEFORE RAHNE CAN ANSWER, THE SUPREME EFFORT PUT FORTH BY BOTH MUTANTS TAKES ITS TOLL AND, WITH APPALLING SUDDENNESS...
...THEY REVERT TO THEIR TRUE SELVES.
PROFESSOR--!?!
I'M S-SO S-S-SCARED!!
I WANT TO GO HOME! I WANT LADY MOIRA!! MAKE US BETTER, PROFESSOR, PLEASE!!!
I'LL TRY, LITTLE ONE.
THERE, THERE, RAHNE--DON'T CRY--YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
HIS HAS BEEN A LONELY EXISTENCE--MOSTLY BY CHOICE. CHARLES XAVIER HAS NEVER KNOWN A CHILD'S DESPERATE NEED OR BEEN THE OBJECT OF ITS PURE, UNQUALIFIED, UNRESTRAINED LOVE. FACED WITH IT NOW, HE DISCOVERS HIMSELF RESPONDING, TO HIS SURPRISE, NOT AS TEACHER OR MENTOR--
--BUT A FATHER.
MEANWHILE...
WE CAN'T RUN FOREVER, TY.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT WE'RE DOING?!
AIN'T DONE N-N-NOTHIN' ELSE.
WE CAN'T ABANDON THOSE KIDS.
IT WAS YOU SAID WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.
THAT'S NOT WHO I MEANT AND YOU KNOW IT! WHATEVER THE MUTANTS ARE GOING THROUGH, IT'S BECAUSE OF US! WE SAY WE CHAMPION KIDS IN TROUBLE, YET WE'RE NOT DOING A BLESSED THING FOR THE TWO WHO NEED US MOST!
THEIR P-P-PROFESSOR'LL LOOK AFTER 'EM JUST FINE.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?! I THOUGHT I KNEW YOU, TYRONE--I THOUGHT YOU CARED--WAS THAT ALL A LIE?!
YEAH, OKAY?! I WAS SAYIN' WHAT YOU W-W-WANTED TO HEAR, SO'S YOU'D LIKE ME B-B-BETTER, OKAY?!!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
THAT'S Y-Y-YOUR PROBLEM.

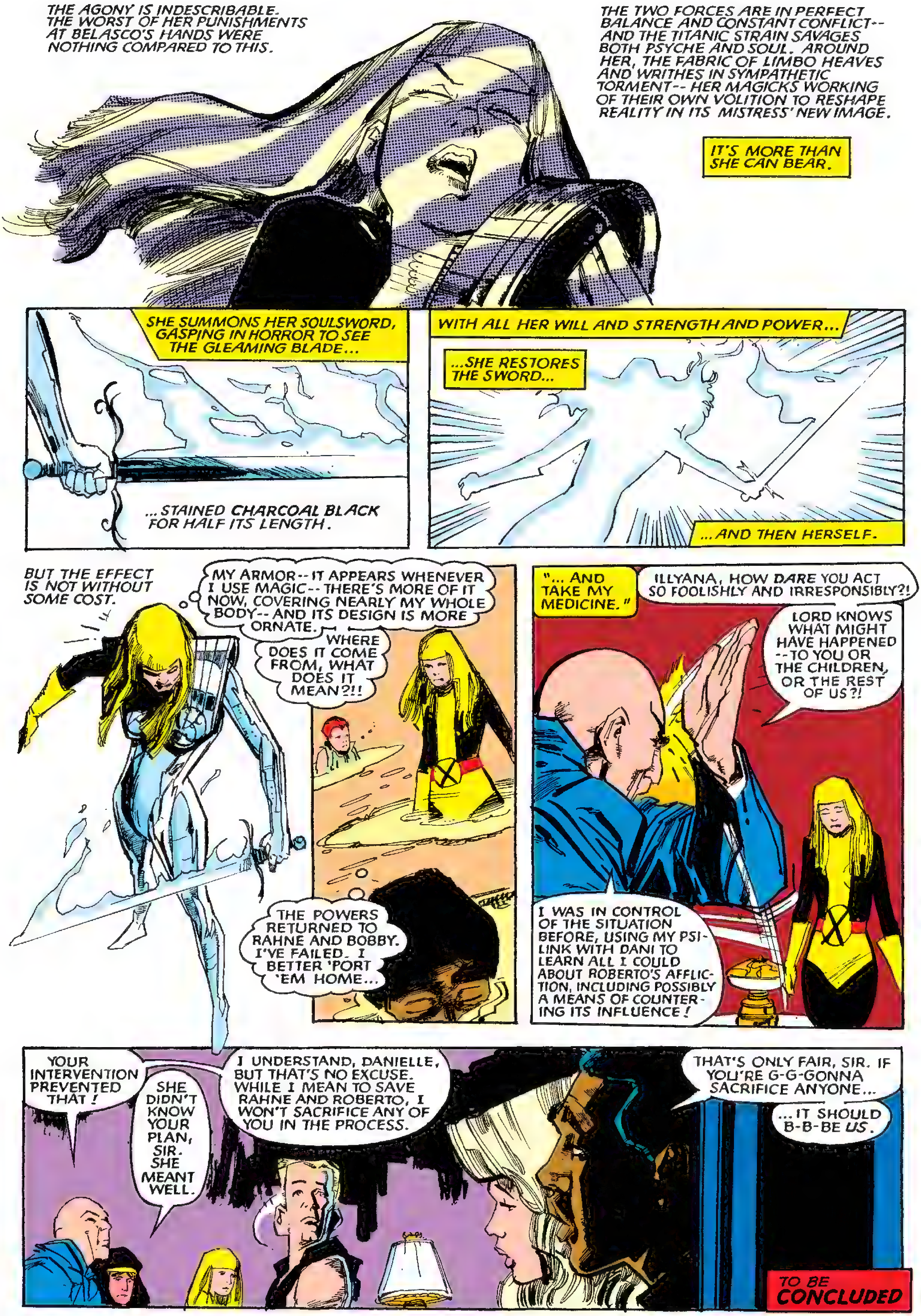

YOU KNOW HOW B-B-BAD I WANT'A SAY YES?! AS CLOAK AN' D-D-DAGGER, WE'RE BOUND TOGETHER.
WITHOUT THAT, WE GOT N-N-*NOTHIN'!*
TY, THAT ISN'T TRUE.
C'MON, TANDY--DAGGER'S B-B-BEAUTIFUL, ALL THAT'S BEST IN LIFE ROLLED UP IN WH-WH-ONE PERSON.
IT'S DIFFERENT FOR ME.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--YOU C-C-CAN'T, NOBODY CAN WHO AIN'T B-B-BEEN THERE--
--WHAT IT'S LIKE FEELING D-D-DARKNESS GROW INSIDE YOU LIKE A C-C-CANCER, AN' YOURSELF BECOMING A SLAVE TO ITS AWFUL H-H-HUNGER.
TANDY, THE MORE I USED MY POWER, THE MORE I W-W-*WANTED* TO. LIKE I'M SOME KIND'A JUNKIE OR VAMPIRE. TOWARDS THE END, IT WAS GETTIN' HARDER AN' H-H-HARDER TO CONTROL!
IT AIN'T FAIR, Y'KNOW?! I MEAN, WHY M-M-ME, WHAT'D *I* EVER DO TO D-D-DESERVE THIS?!!
WHAT DID THOSE KIDS DO? THEY'RE SO MUCH YOUNGER THAN US, TY--HARDLY MORE THAN BABIES. IF BEING CLOAK WAS SUCH A CURSE FOR YOU, HOW CAN YOU WISH IT ON ANYONE ELSE?
BUT IF YOU CAN DO THAT, AND WALK AWAY, THEN YOU'RE RIGHT: YOU HAVE LOST ME. BECAUSE I CAN'T BE THAT CRUEL. IT MAKES US NO BETTER THAN THE SCUM WE FOUGHT.
SOME CHOICE--EITHER I LOSE THE PERSON WHO MEANS MORE TO ME THAN ANYONE...
OR MAYBE MY OWN SOUL.
PETER'S SOUND ASLEEP, PROFESSOR. I MADE HIM AS COMFORTABLE AS I COULD.
THANK YOU, ILLYANA. DON'T WORRY, MY PSI-PROBE OF YOUR BROTHER REVEALS NO LASTING ILL EFFECTS FROM HIS EXPERIENCE.
*BY THE WAY, SAM, WHILE I APPRECIATE THE NEED FOR SELF-EXPRESSION, WE ARE A RESPECTABLE SCHOOL, NOT A COLLECTION OF RAGAMUFFINS. THIS REQUIRES THAT CERTAIN STANDARDS BE MAINTAINED. IN FUTURE, PLEASE DRESS ACCORDINGLY.*
YESSIR.
LILA
LOVE YOUR SHIRT, SAM--AND YOUR LADY LILA'S MUSIC.
THANKS, ROGUE--*sigh!*

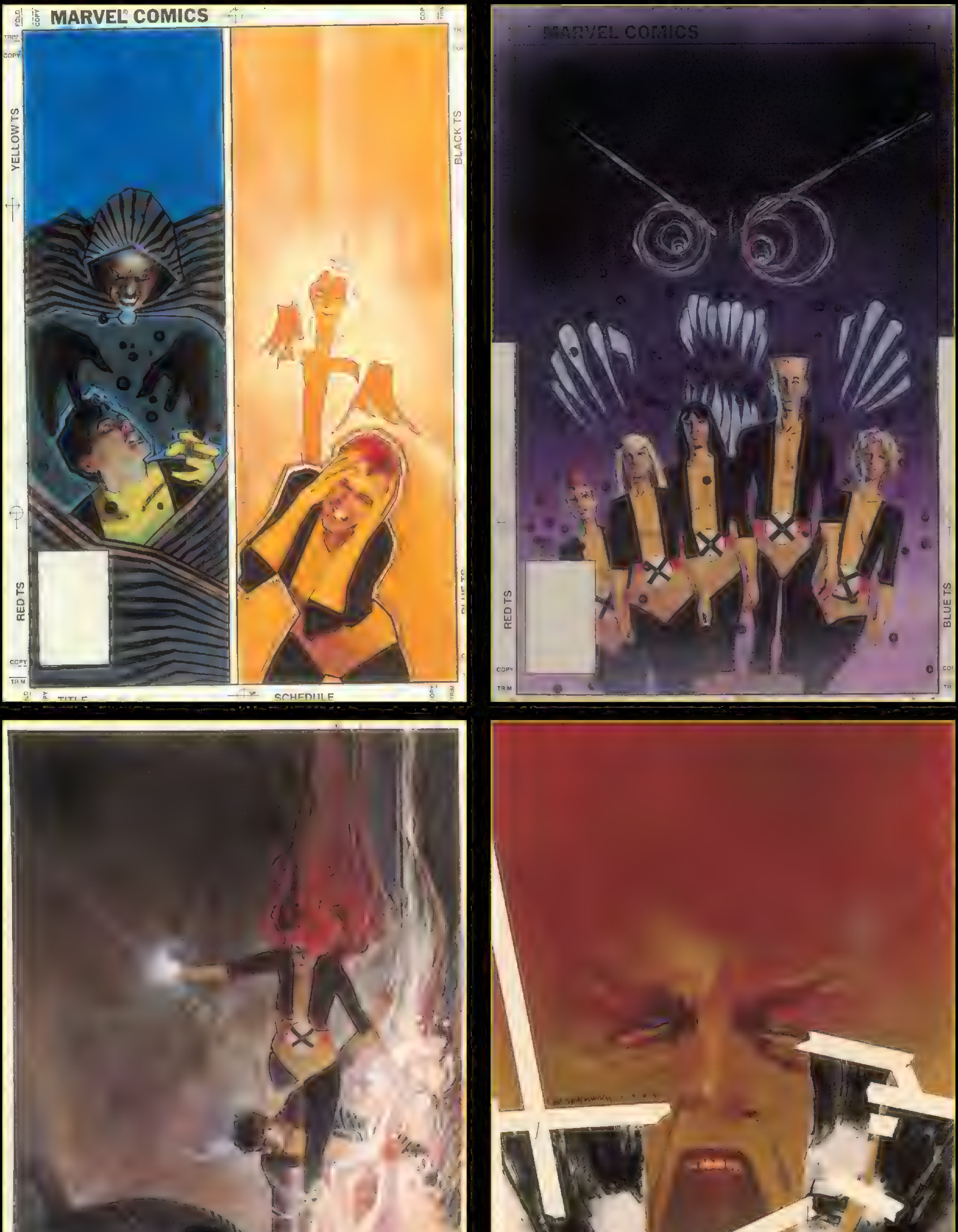

THIS IS HALLOWED GROUND--THE DEMON SORCERESS PART OF ME HATES IT.
I FEEL LIKE SOMEBODY'S SCRAPING CLAWS ACROSS A BLACKBOARD--IF PETER WEREN'T MY BIG BROTHER, I'D BE LONG GONE FROM HERE.
HOW'S IT GOING, CHARLES?
I'VE PSI-PROBED EVERY FACET OF THEIR MINDS, MICHAEL. YET I KNOW LITTLE MORE THAN WHEN I BEGAN.
RAHNE'S NATURAL LIFE-FORCE HAS BEEN AMPLIFIED TO AN UNIMAGINABLE--PERHAPS ULTIMATE--DEGREE. SHE'S LITERALLY BURSTING WITH ENERGY.
BUT WHATEVER'S AFFECTING ROBERTO IS BEYOND MY ABILITY TO ISOLATE. IT ISN'T A FUNCTION OF HIS OWN PSYCHE--IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING THAT MANIFESTS ITSELF THROUGH HIM, MAKING HIM IN EFFECT A VESSEL FOR AN OUTSIDE FORCE OR ENTITY, BUT THERE'S NO SOLID INDICATION OF THAT. I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO SENSE ANY OTHER PRESENCE.
I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED ANYTHING REMOTELY LIKE THIS. IF THE SITUATION WEREN'T SO CRITICAL, IT WOULD REALLY BE QUITE FASCINATING.
MAYBE *MY* PSI-TALENT CAN DO THE TRICK, PROFESSOR--ESPECIALLY SINCE I INTERACT WITH EMOTIONS AS MUCH AS THOUGHTS.
I'VE SEEN AND FELT WHAT THE BOY CAN DO, DANIELLE. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.
DO WE GIVE UP, THEN?
I'M WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK, SIR. THEY'VE BOTH DONE AS MUCH FOR ME.
ALL RIGHT...
...BUT JOIN *EN RAPPORT* WITH ME FIRST, SO I CAN MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS AND BE READY TO HELP IF YOU HIT TROUBLE.
*AS SOON AS XAVIER'S READY, DANI INTERFACES WITH ROBERTO'S MIND, SEEKING WHATEVER HE FEARS MOST, HOPING TO PROVOKE A REACTION FROM WHATEVER HAS POSSESSED HIM.*


SHE GETS HER WISH...
...AS SHADOW EXPLODES FROM HIM...
...SMASHING INTO EVERYONE PRESENT WITH IRRESISTIBLE FORCE, OBLITERATING ANY PSYCHIC DEFENSES AS IF THEY DON'T EXIST, FILLING THEIR HEARTS WITH UTTER DESPAIR, EATING AWAY AT THEIR SOULS.
RAHNE HAS THE POWER TO FIGHT IT...
...BUT SHE'S CAUGHT UNAWARES--DEEP ASLEEP, WHERE HER CHILD-SELF IS MOST VULNERABLE--AND THE SHADOW SURROUNDS HER WITH NIGHTMARES...
...STRIPPING HER OF THE WILL TO RESIST.
ONLY XAVIER SEEMS UNAFFECTED BY THE BRUTAL ONSLAUGHT.
THEN, SUDDENLY...
...A BLINDING, SILVER RADIANCE SLASHES THROUGH THE DARKNESS:
...ILLYANA'S SOULSWORD--THE ESSENCE OF HER MAGICKAL POWERS...
...FOCUSED INTO A WEAPON NO ELDRITCH ENTITY OR SPELL CAN WITHSTAND.


THE ROOM'S RETURNED TO NORMAL--MY *SWORD* BROKE THE SHADOW'S LINK WITH DANI.
THAT MUST BE WHY THE PROF ASKED ME ALONG. I JUST WISH HE'D GIVEN ME A LITTLE ADVANCE WARNING. FOR AN INSTANT, WHEN EVERYTHING WENT BLACK, I THOUGHT I WAS A KID AGAIN, APPRENTICE TO THE DEMON LORD *BELASCO*.
DANI LOOKS OKAY--THOUGH EVERYONE'S PRETTY ROCKY. THE BACKLASH HIT 'EM HARD.
LIKE DALLAS--SHADOW... WITHIN AND WITHOUT... ITS TOUCH... SHRIVELING ME... MAKING ME ITS OWN...
ROGUE'S RIGHT--THIS IS A LOT LIKE THOSE CRITTERS I HELPED THE X-MEN FIGHT IN DALLAS.*
THEY WERE CREATURES OF SORCERY.
*X-MEN #'s 187 & 188--AnnN.
WE USED SPELLS TO GET RID OF 'EM.
MAYBE I CAN CURE THE KIDS THE SAME WAY.
MY ENCHANTMENTS WON'T WORK ON EARTH--ESPECIALLY IN A HOLY PLACE--I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THEM TO *LIMBO*.
USING HER MUTANT TELEPORTING TALENT, ILLYANA SUMMONS A TRIO OF "STEPPING DISCS"...
ILLYANA--?!!
CHILD, *NO!* WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! *COME BACK!!*
...AND TRANSPORTS THE THREE OF THEM TO HER MAGICKAL DOMAIN.
THIS IS WHERE ILLYANA GREW UP--FOR HALF HER LIFE, FROM WHEN SHE WAS YOUNGER'N ME--
--IT'S *AWFUL!*
AN' SHE'S FACING THE BASE OF HER STAR--FROM WHAT DANI TOLD ME, THAT MEANS SHE'S USING *BLACK MAGIC!*

THIS IS WRONG, IT'S *EVIL*--
--I'LL BE NO PART OF IT!
YOU'LL STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, YOUNG LADY, AND REMAIN HUMAN!
I CANNA MOVE!
LEAVE US ALONE, WITCH!!
CAN'T DO THAT, KIDDO.
I KNOW YOU WON'T BELIEVE ME, RAHNE, BUT THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
OF ALL THE NEW MUTANTS, ONLY DANIELLE MOONSTAR HAS SEEN ILLYANA IN ACTION WITHIN THIS ELDRITCH LAND WHERE HER WILL IS ABSOLUTE LAW. STRANGELY ENOUGH, THAT EXPERIENCE FORGED AND STRENGTHENED THE TWO YOUNG WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIP.
RAHNE'S REACTION IS JUST THE OPPOSITE. WHAT SHE SEES AND FEELS--AS ILLYANA'S EXORCISM PURGES HER AND ROBERTO--IS AN ABOMINATION, AND SHE RESISTS WITH ALL HER FIERCE WOLFEN STRENGTH.
PERHAPS THAT'S WHY THE SPELL BACKFIRES.
THE LIGHT AND SHADOW POWERS ARE INDEED DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOSTS--ONLY TO IMMEDIATELY LAY CLAIM TO THE ONLY OTHER ONE AVAILABLE:
...ILLYANA HERSELF!


THE AGONY IS INDESCRIBABLE. THE WORST OF HER PUNISHMENTS AT BELASCO'S HANDS WERE NOTHING COMPARED TO THIS.
THE TWO FORCES ARE IN PERFECT BALANCE AND CONSTANT CONFLICT-- AND THE TITANIC STRAIN SAVAGES BOTH PSYCHE AND SOUL. AROUND HER, THE FABRIC OF LIMBO HEAVES AND WRITHES IN SYMPATHETIC TORMENT-- HER MAGICKS WORKING OF THEIR OWN VOLITION TO RESHAPE REALITY IN ITS MISTRESS' NEW IMAGE.
IT'S MORE THAN SHE CAN BEAR.
SHE SUMMONS HER SOULSWORD, GASPING IN HORROR TO SEE THE GLEAMING BLADE...
...STAINED CHARCOAL BLACK FOR HALF ITS LENGTH.
WITH ALL HER WILL AND STRENGTH AND POWER...
...SHE RESTORES THE SWORD...
...AND THEN HERSELF.
BUT THE EFFECT IS NOT WITHOUT SOME COST.
MY ARMOR-- IT APPEARS WHENEVER I USE MAGIC-- THERE'S MORE OF IT NOW, COVERING NEARLY MY WHOLE BODY-- AND ITS DESIGN IS MORE ORNATE.
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?!!
THE POWERS RETURNED TO RAHNE AND BOBBY. I'VE FAILED. I BETTER 'PORT 'EM HOME...
"... AND TAKE MY MEDICINE."
ILLYANA, HOW DARE YOU ACT SO FOOLISHLY AND IRRESPONSIBLY?!
LORD KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED --TO YOU OR THE CHILDREN, OR THE REST OF US?!
I WAS IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION BEFORE, USING MY PSI-LINK WITH DANI TO LEARN ALL I COULD ABOUT ROBERTO'S AFFLICTION, INCLUDING POSSIBLY A MEANS OF COUNTERING ITS INFLUENCE!
YOUR INTERVENTION PREVENTED THAT!
SHE DIDN'T KNOW YOUR PLAN, SIR. SHE MEANT WELL.
I UNDERSTAND, DANIELLE, BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE. WHILE I MEAN TO SAVE RAHNE AND ROBERTO, I WON'T SACRIFICE ANY OF YOU IN THE PROCESS.
THAT'S ONLY FAIR, SIR. IF YOU'RE G-G-GONNA SACRIFICE ANYONE...
...IT SHOULD B-B-BE US.
TO BE CONCLUDED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*NEW MUTANTS #23-26* COVER PAINTINGS BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

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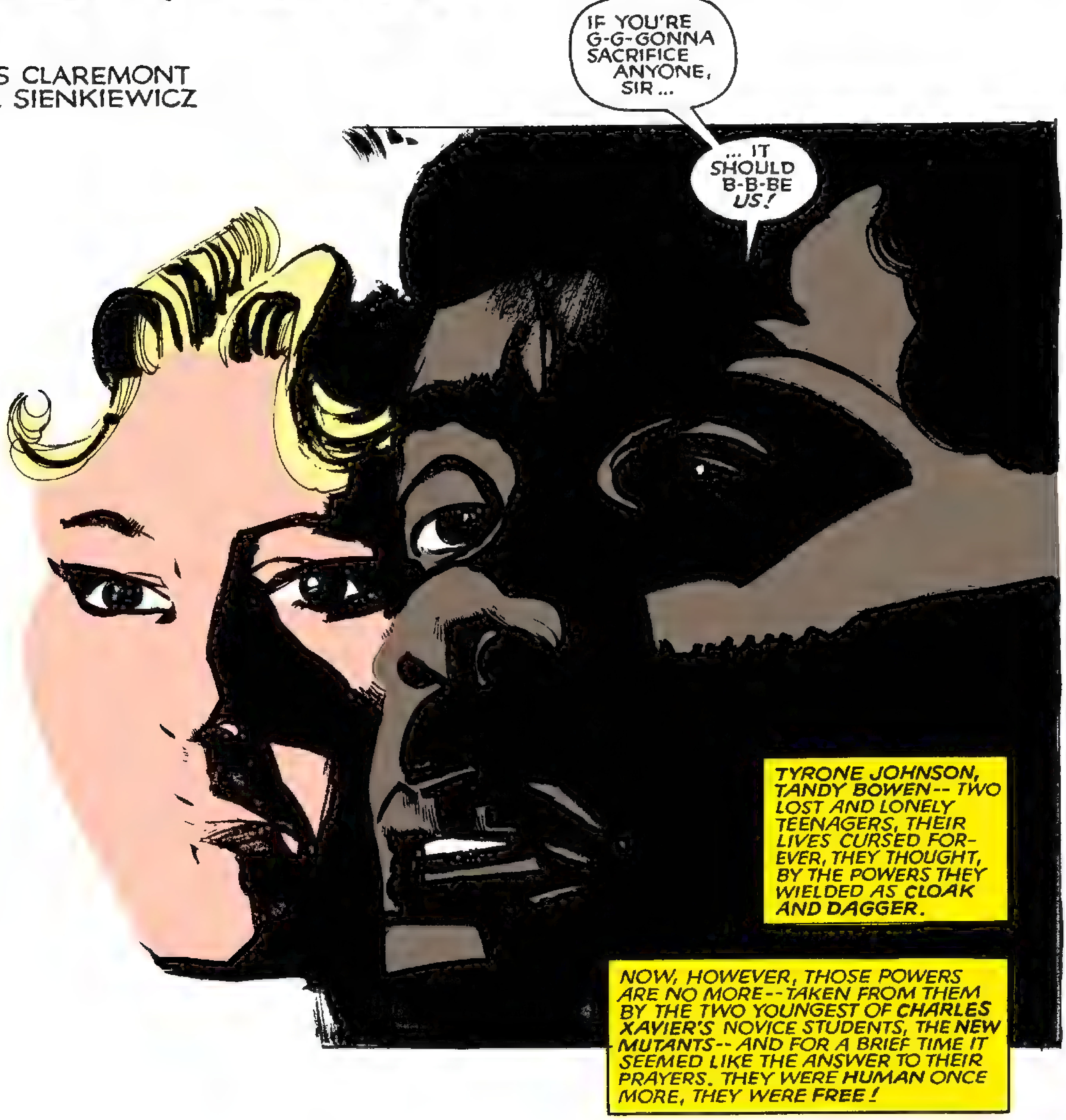
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE NEW MUTANTS
the Price of Power

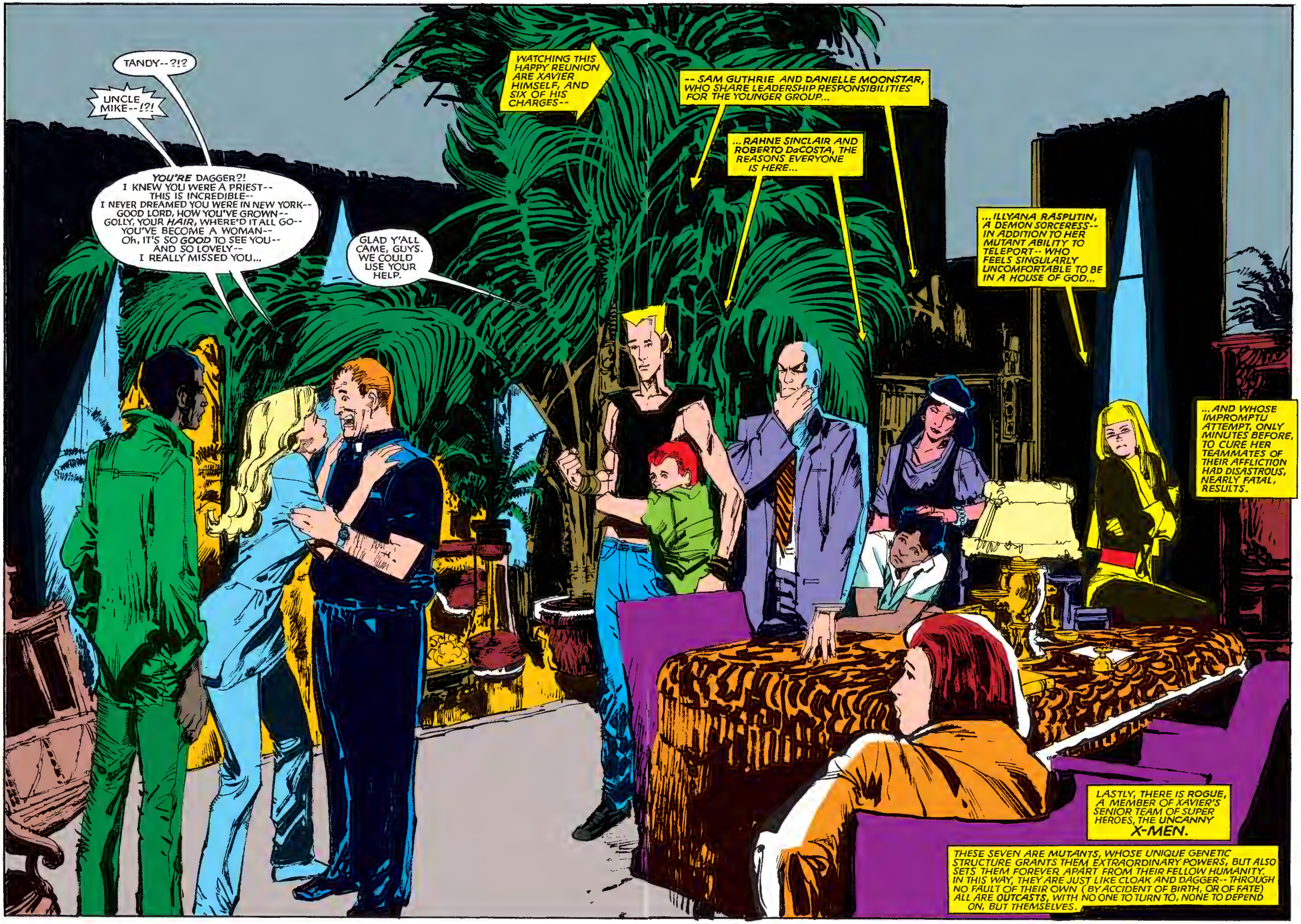
# THE ONLY THING TO FEAR...

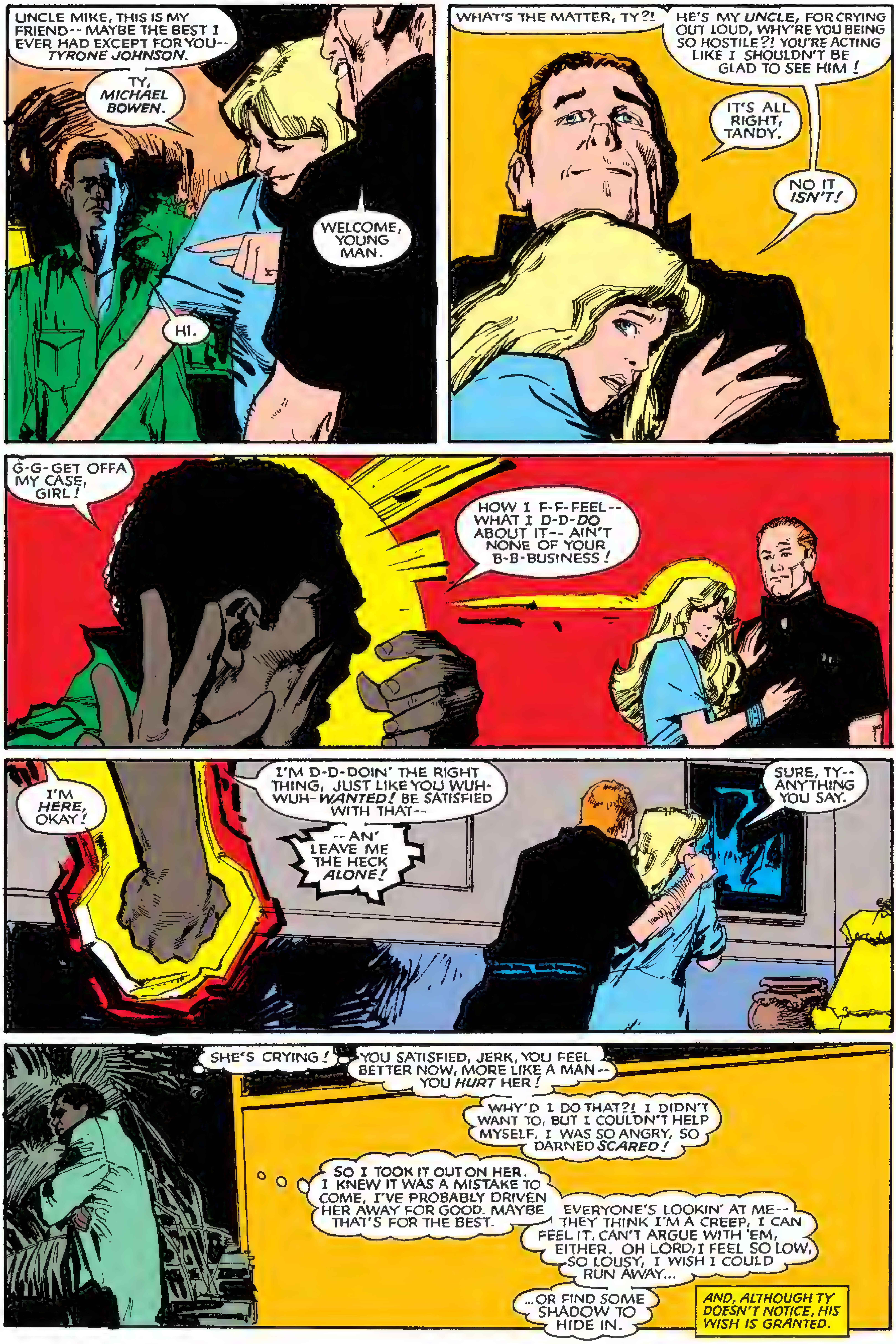
*BY* CHRIS CLAREMONT
*AND* BILL SIENKIEWICZ

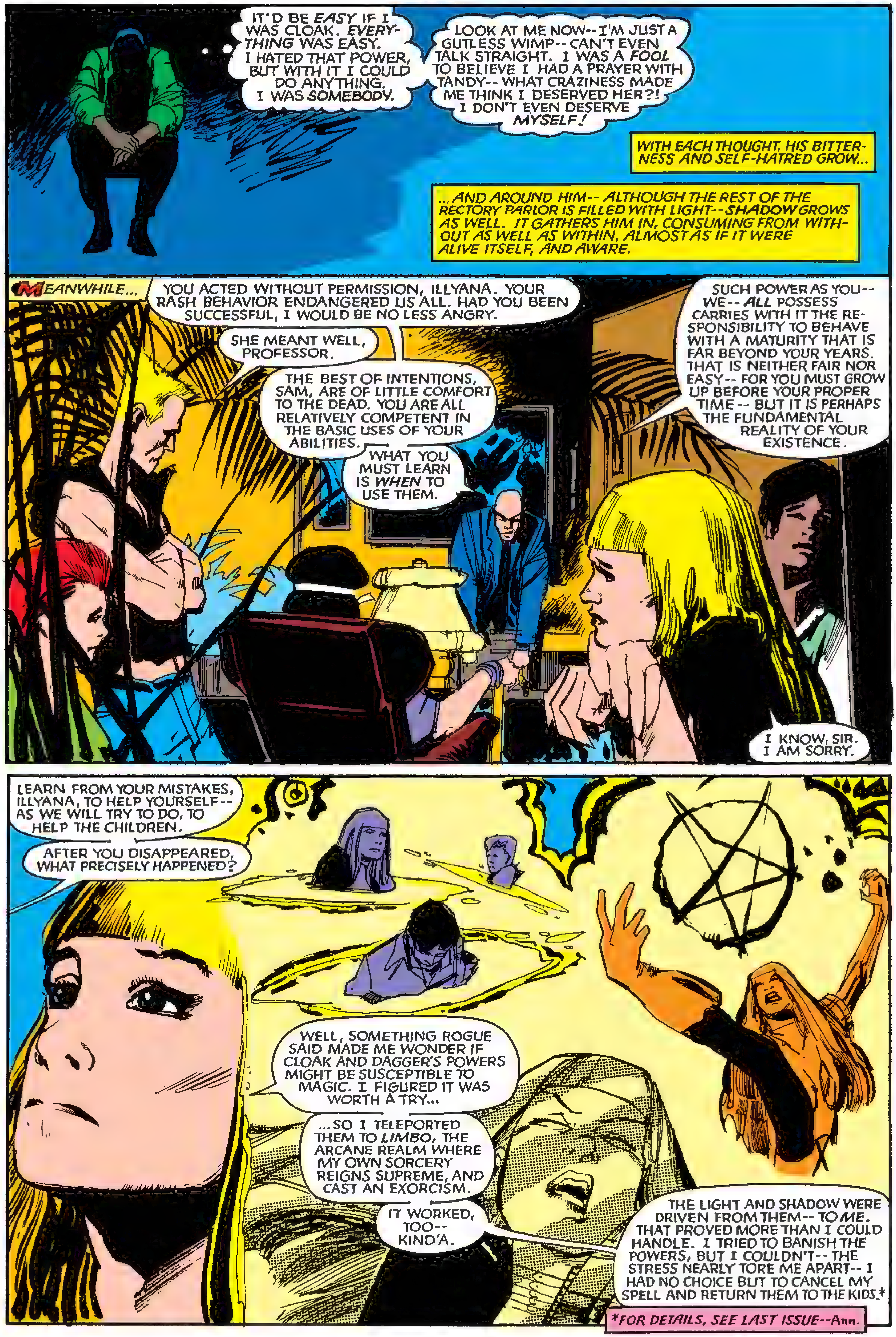

IF YOU'RE G-G-GONNA SACRIFICE ANYONE, SIR ...
... IT SHOULD B-B-BE *US!*
TYRONE JOHNSON, TANDY BOWEN-- TWO LOST AND LONELY TEENAGERS, THEIR LIVES CURSED FOREVER, THEY THOUGHT, BY THE POWERS THEY WIELDED AS **CLOAK AND DAGGER**.
NOW, HOWEVER, THOSE POWERS ARE NO MORE--TAKEN FROM THEM BY THE TWO YOUNGEST OF **CHARLES XAVIER'S** NOVICE STUDENTS, THE **NEW MUTANTS**-- AND FOR A BRIEF TIME IT SEEMED LIKE THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS. THEY WERE **HUMAN** ONCE MORE, THEY WERE **FREE!**

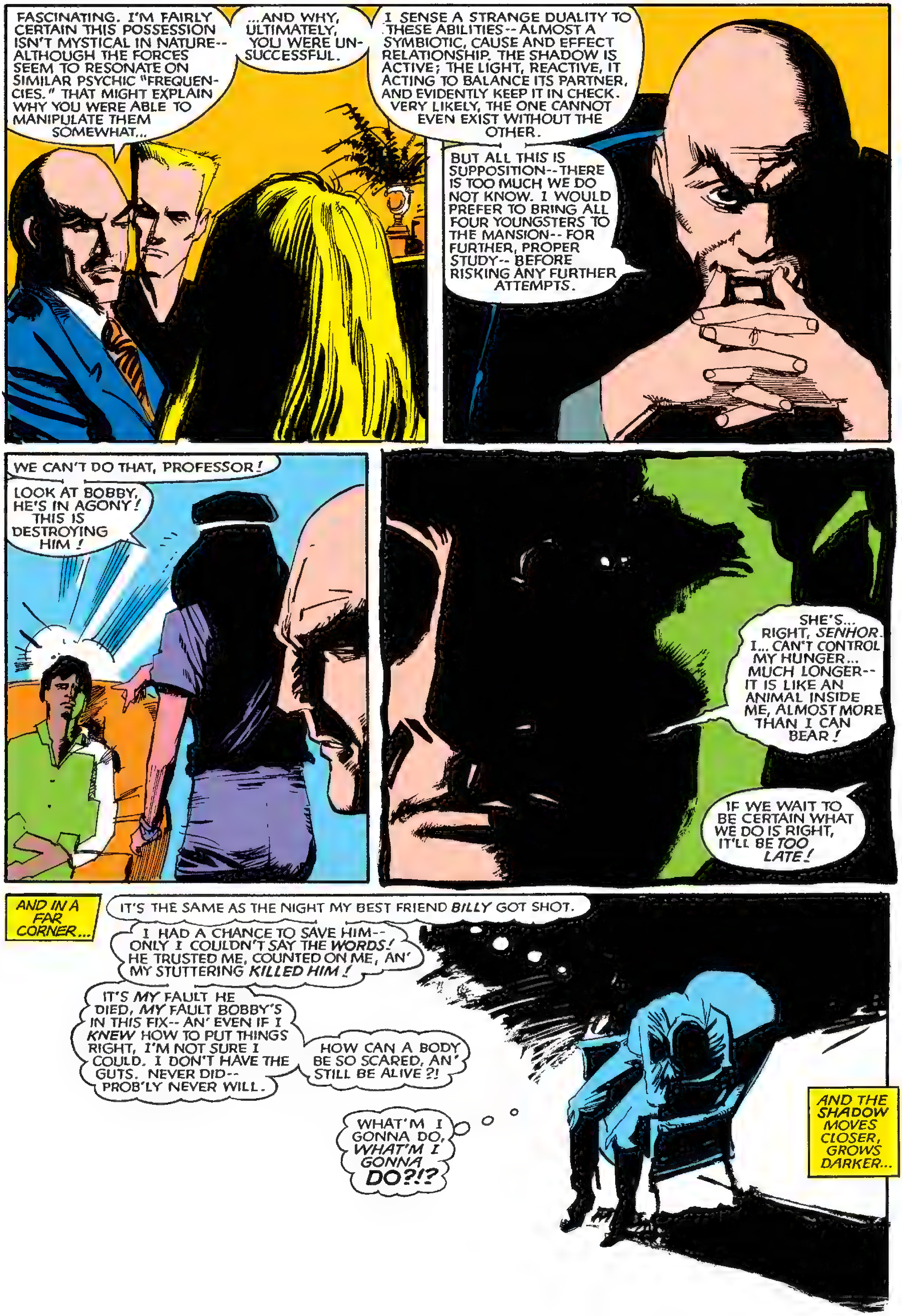
*BUT THE PRICE OF REMAINING SO-- THE CONDEMNATION OF TWO INNOCENT SOULS-- PROVED AN EVEN MORE TERRIBLE BURDEN AND SO THEY HAVE COME TO **ST. ANNE'S CHURCH** ON MANHATTAN'S LOWER EAST SIDE TO TRY TO SAVE THEM.*

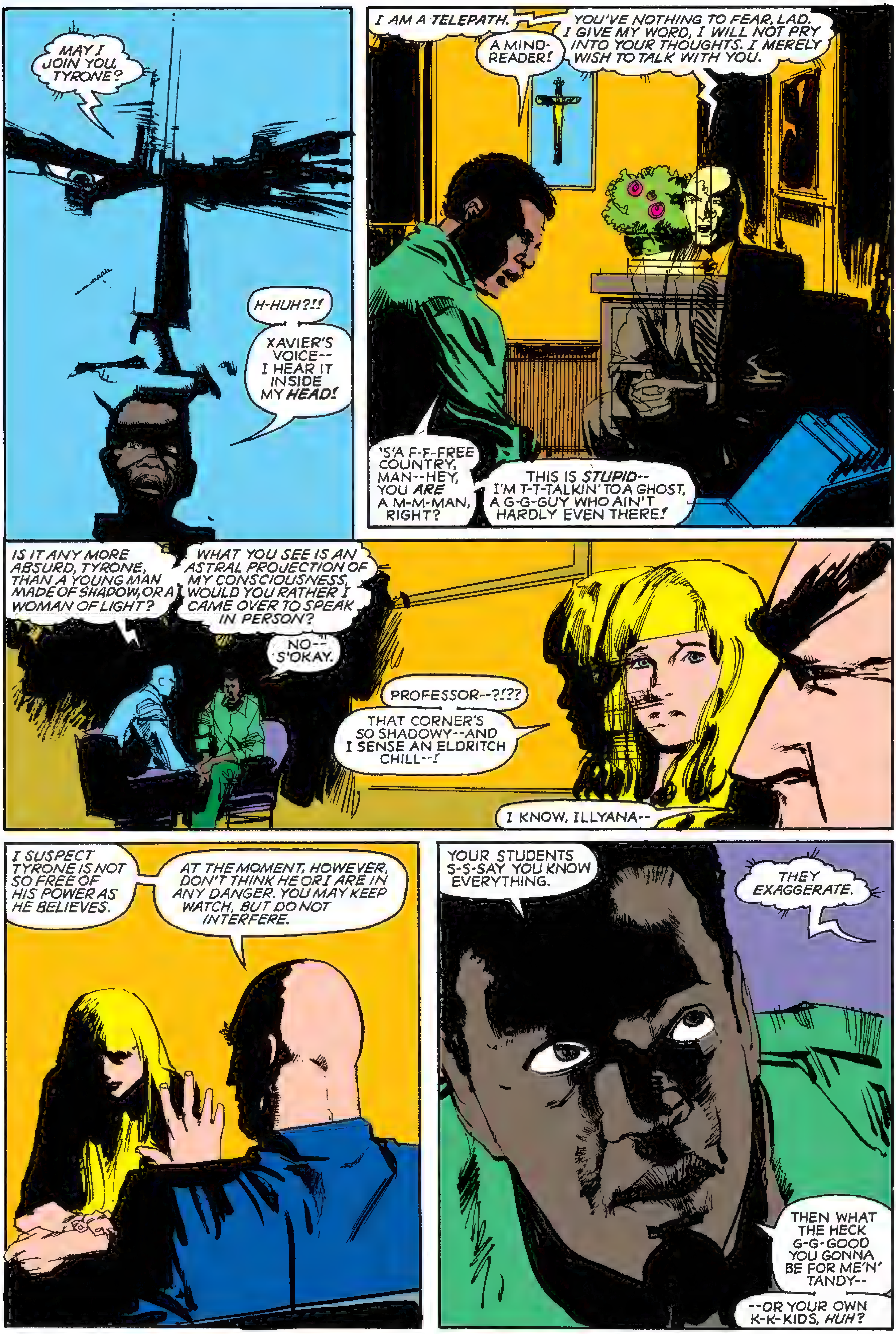
STAN LEE, *PRESENTER*
ORZECHOWSKI & BUHALIS, *LETTERERS*
GLYNIS WEIN, *COLORIST*
ANN NOCENTI, *EDITOR*
JIM SHOOTER, *EDITOR-IN-CHIEF*
NEW MUTANTS, *STARS*

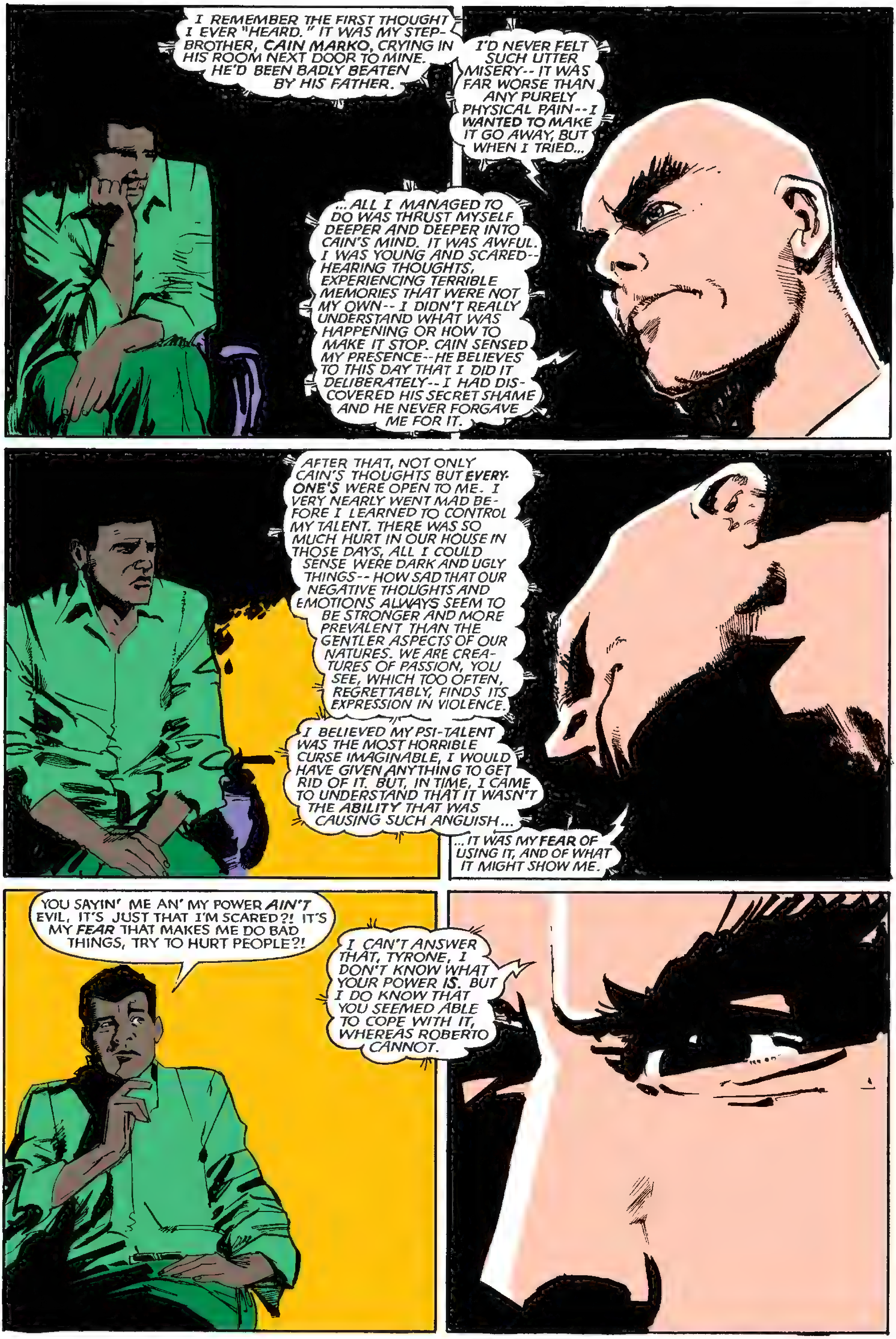

TANDY--?!?
UNCLE MIKE--!?!
YOU'RE DAGGER?! I KNEW YOU WERE A PRIEST-- THIS IS INCREDIBLE-- I NEVER DREAMED YOU WERE IN NEW YORK-- GOOD LORD, HOW YOU'VE GROWN-- GOLLY, YOUR HAIR, WHERE'D IT ALL GO-- YOU'VE BECOME A WOMAN-- Oh, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU-- AND SO LOVELY-- I REALLY MISSED YOU...
GLAD Y'ALL CAME, GUYS. WE COULD USE YOUR HELP.
WATCHING THIS HAPPY REUNION ARE XAVIER HIMSELF, AND SIX OF HIS CHARGES--
-- SAM GUTHRIE AND DANIELLE MOONSTAR, WHO SHARE LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE YOUNGER GROUP...
...RAHNE SINCLAIR AND ROBERTO DaCOSTA, THE REASONS EVERYONE IS HERE...
...ILLYANA RASPUTIN, A DEMON SORCERESS-- IN ADDITION TO HER MUTANT ABILITY TO TELEPORT-- WHO FEELS SINGULARLY UNCOMFORTABLE TO BE IN A HOUSE OF GOD...
...AND WHOSE IMPROMPTU ATTEMPT, ONLY MINUTES BEFORE, TO CURE HER TEAMMATES OF THEIR AFFLICTION HAD DISASTROUS, NEARLY FATAL, RESULTS.
LASTLY, THERE IS ROGUE, A MEMBER OF XAVIER'S SENIOR TEAM OF SUPER HEROES, THE UNCANNY X-MEN.
THESE SEVEN ARE MUTANTS, WHOSE UNIQUE GENETIC STRUCTURE GRANTS THEM EXTRAORDINARY POWERS, BUT ALSO SETS THEM FOREVER APART FROM THEIR FELLOW HUMANITY. IN THIS WAY, THEY ARE JUST LIKE CLOAK AND DAGGER-- THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN (BY ACCIDENT OF BIRTH, OR OF FATE) ALL ARE OUTCASTS, WITH NO ONE TO TURN TO, NONE TO DEPEND ON, BUT THEMSELVES.

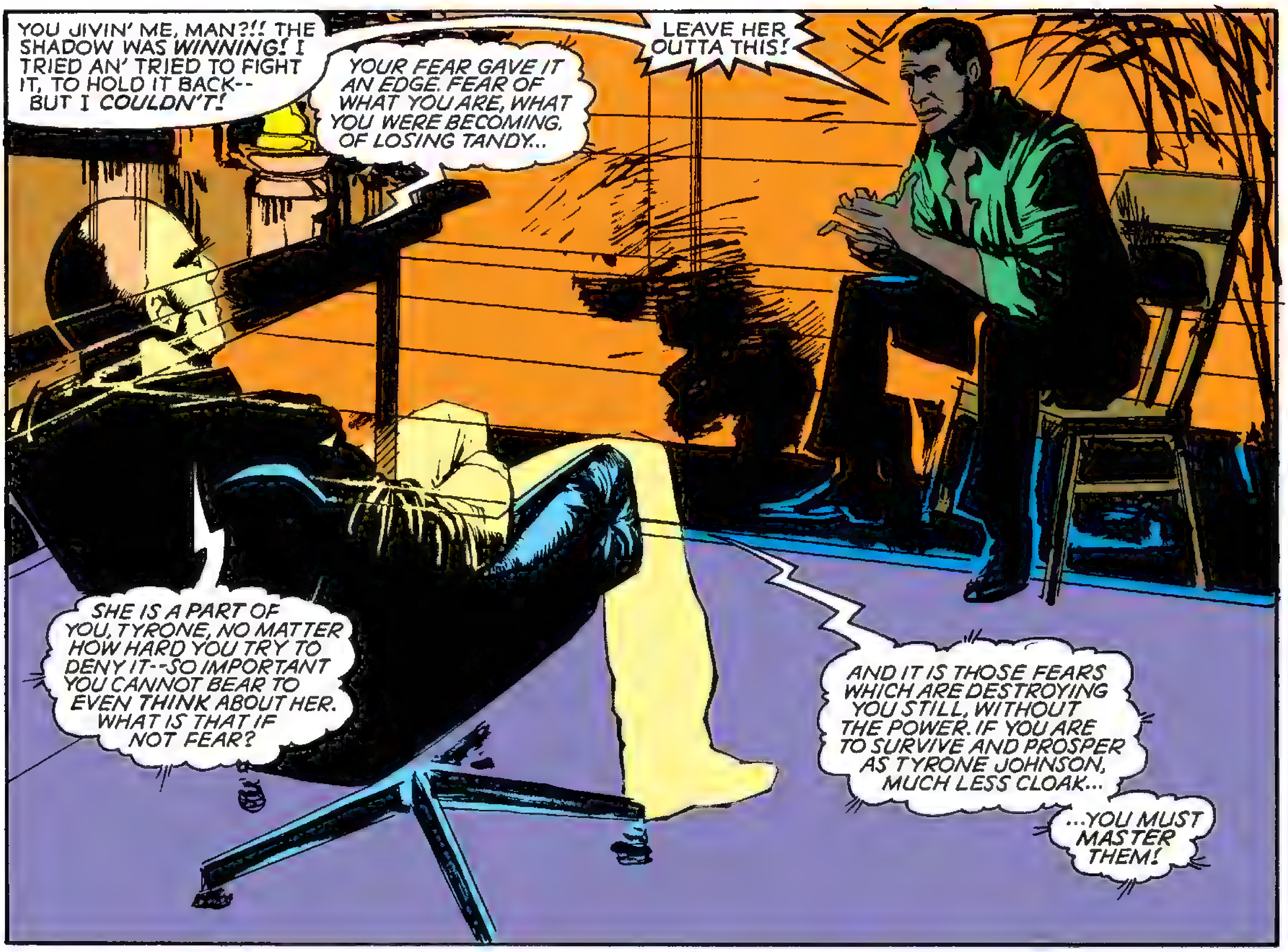

UNCLE MIKE, THIS IS MY FRIEND-- MAYBE THE BEST I EVER HAD EXCEPT FOR YOU-- *TYRONE JOHNSON.*
TY, *MICHAEL BOWEN.*
WELCOME, YOUNG MAN.
HI.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, TY?!
HE'S MY *UNCLE*, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, WHY'RE YOU BEING SO HOSTILE?! YOU'RE ACTING LIKE I SHOULDN'T BE GLAD TO SEE HIM!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, TANDY.
NO IT *ISN'T!*
G-G-GET OFFA MY CASE, GIRL!
HOW I F-F-FEEL-- WHAT I D-D-*DO* ABOUT IT-- AIN'T NONE OF YOUR B-B-BUSINESS!
I'M *HERE*, OKAY!
I'M D-D-DOIN' THE RIGHT THING, JUST LIKE YOU WUH-WUH-*WANTED!* BE SATISFIED WITH THAT--
--AN' LEAVE ME THE HECK *ALONE!*
SURE, TY-- ANYTHING YOU SAY.
SHE'S CRYING!
YOU SATISFIED, JERK, YOU FEEL BETTER NOW, MORE LIKE A MAN-- YOU *HURT* HER!
WHY'D I DO THAT?! I DIDN'T WANT TO, BUT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF, I WAS SO ANGRY, SO DARNED *SCARED!*
SO I TOOK IT OUT ON HER. I KNEW IT WAS A MISTAKE TO COME, I'VE PROBABLY DRIVEN HER AWAY FOR GOOD. MAYBE THAT'S FOR THE BEST.
EVERYONE'S LOOKIN' AT ME-- THEY THINK I'M A CREEP, I CAN FEEL IT. CAN'T ARGUE WITH 'EM, EITHER. OH LORD, I FEEL SO LOW, SO LOUSY, I WISH I COULD RUN AWAY...
...OR FIND SOME SHADOW TO HIDE IN.
*AND, ALTHOUGH TY DOESN'T NOTICE, HIS WISH IS GRANTED.*

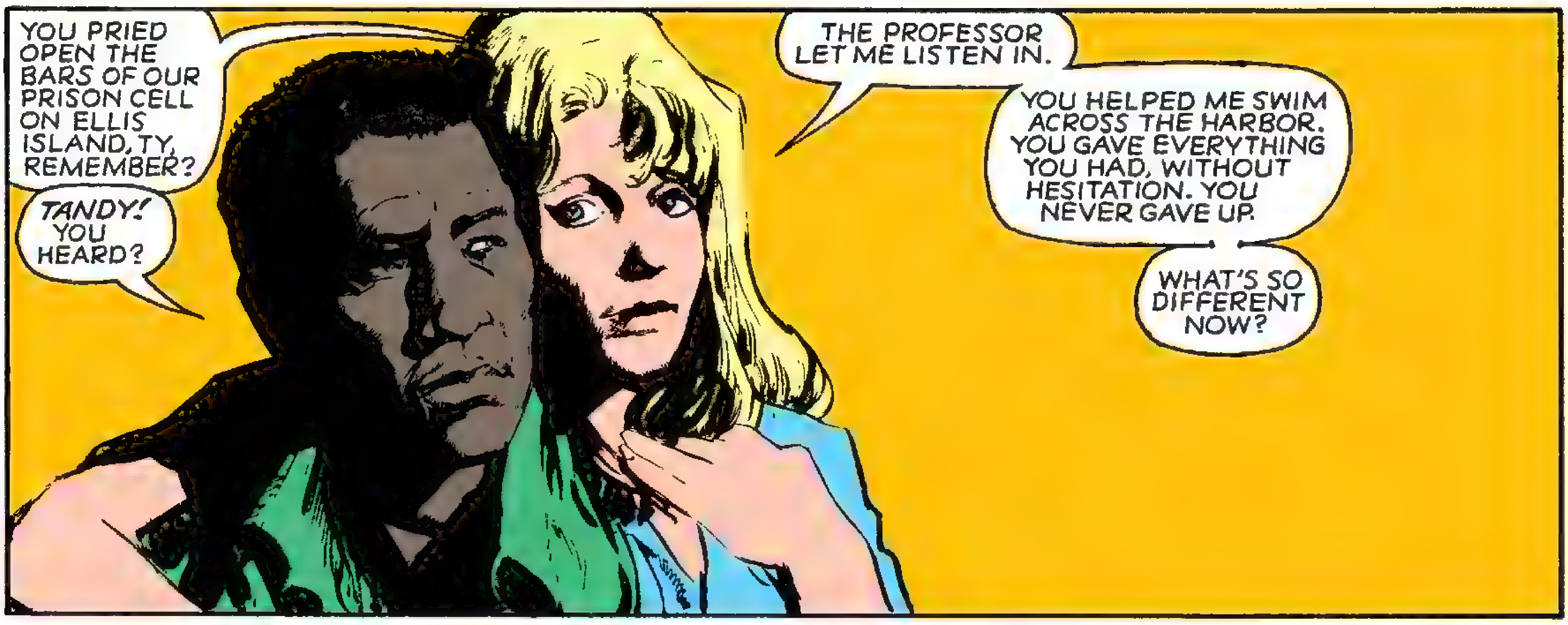

IT'D BE *EASY* IF I WAS CLOAK. *EVERYTHING* WAS EASY. I HATED THAT POWER, BUT WITH IT I COULD DO ANYTHING. I WAS *SOMEBODY.*
LOOK AT ME NOW-- I'M JUST A GUTLESS WIMP-- CAN'T EVEN TALK STRAIGHT. I WAS A *FOOL* TO BELIEVE I HAD A PRAYER WITH TANDY-- WHAT CRAZINESS MADE ME THINK I DESERVED HER?! I DON'T EVEN DESERVE *MYSELF!*
WITH EACH THOUGHT, HIS BITTERNESS AND SELF-HATRED GROW...
...AND AROUND HIM-- ALTHOUGH THE REST OF THE RECTORY PARLOR IS FILLED WITH LIGHT-- *SHADOW* GROWS AS WELL. IT GATHERS HIM IN, CONSUMING FROM WITHOUT AS WELL AS WITHIN, ALMOST AS IF IT WERE ALIVE ITSELF, AND AWARE.
MEANWHILE...
YOU ACTED WITHOUT PERMISSION, ILLYANA. YOUR RASH BEHAVIOR ENDANGERED US ALL. HAD YOU BEEN SUCCESSFUL, I WOULD BE NO LESS ANGRY.
SHE MEANT WELL, PROFESSOR.
THE BEST OF INTENTIONS, SAM, ARE OF LITTLE COMFORT TO THE DEAD. YOU ARE ALL RELATIVELY COMPETENT IN THE BASIC USES OF YOUR ABILITIES.
WHAT YOU MUST LEARN IS *WHEN* TO USE THEM.
SUCH POWER AS YOU-- WE-- *ALL* POSSESS CARRIES WITH IT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BEHAVE WITH A MATURITY THAT IS FAR BEYOND YOUR YEARS. THAT IS NEITHER FAIR NOR EASY-- FOR YOU MUST GROW UP BEFORE YOUR PROPER TIME-- BUT IT IS PERHAPS THE FUNDAMENTAL REALITY OF YOUR EXISTENCE.
I KNOW, SIR. I AM SORRY.
LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES, ILLYANA, TO HELP YOURSELF-- AS WE WILL TRY TO DO, TO HELP THE CHILDREN.
AFTER YOU DISAPPEARED, WHAT PRECISELY HAPPENED?
WELL, SOMETHING ROGUE SAID MADE ME WONDER IF CLOAK AND DAGGER'S POWERS MIGHT BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO MAGIC. I FIGURED IT WAS WORTH A TRY...
...SO I TELEPORTED THEM TO *LIMBO,* THE ARCANE REALM WHERE MY OWN SORCERY REIGNS SUPREME, AND CAST AN EXORCISM.
IT WORKED, TOO-- KIND'A.
THE LIGHT AND SHADOW WERE DRIVEN FROM THEM-- TO *ME.* THAT PROVED MORE THAN I COULD HANDLE. I TRIED TO BANISH THE POWERS, BUT I COULDN'T-- THE STRESS NEARLY TORE ME APART-- I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO CANCEL MY SPELL AND RETURN THEM TO THE KIDS.*
*FOR DETAILS, SEE LAST ISSUE--Ann.

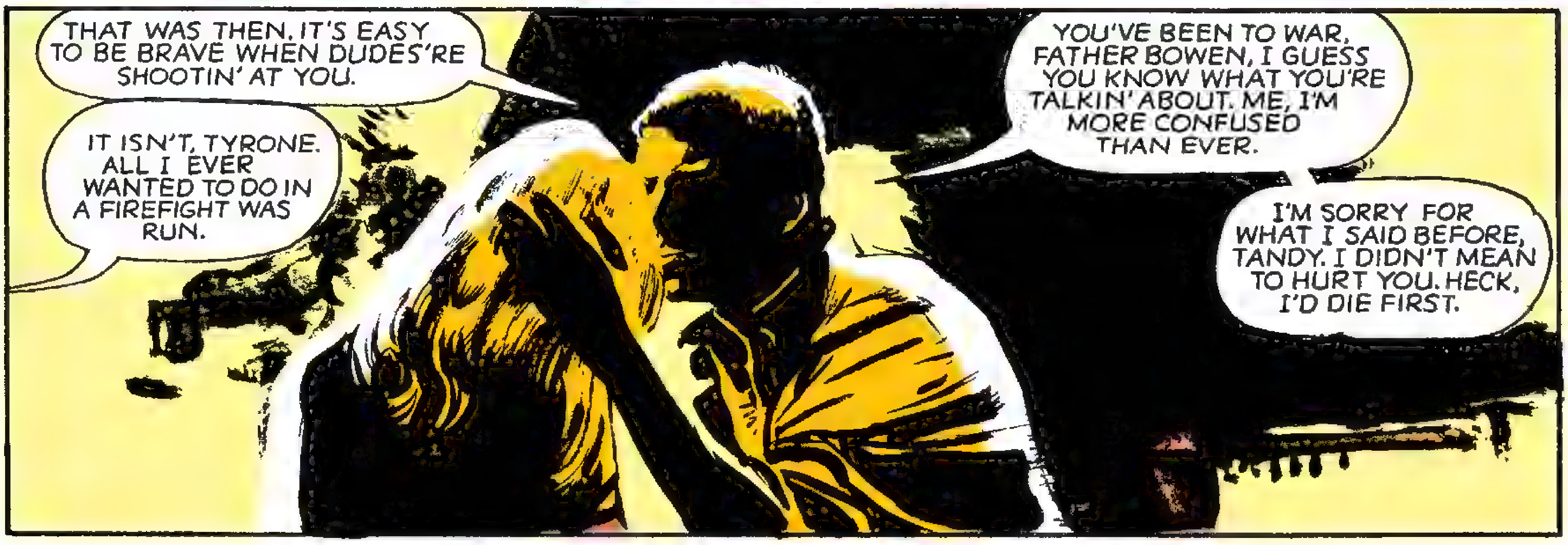

FASCINATING. I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN THIS POSSESSION ISN'T MYSTICAL IN NATURE-- ALTHOUGH THE FORCES SEEM TO RESONATE ON SIMILAR PSYCHIC "FREQUENCIES." THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY YOU WERE ABLE TO MANIPULATE THEM SOMEWHAT...
...AND WHY, ULTIMATELY, YOU WERE UNSUCCESSFUL.
I SENSE A STRANGE DUALITY TO THESE ABILITIES--ALMOST A SYMBIOTIC, CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIP. THE SHADOW IS ACTIVE; THE LIGHT, REACTIVE, IT ACTING TO BALANCE ITS PARTNER, AND EVIDENTLY KEEP IT IN CHECK. VERY LIKELY, THE ONE CANNOT EVEN EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER.
BUT ALL THIS IS SUPPOSITION--THERE IS TOO MUCH WE DO NOT KNOW. I WOULD PREFER TO BRING ALL FOUR YOUNGSTERS TO THE MANSION--FOR FURTHER, PROPER STUDY-- BEFORE RISKING ANY FURTHER ATTEMPTS.
WE CAN'T DO THAT, PROFESSOR!
LOOK AT BOBBY, HE'S IN AGONY! THIS IS DESTROYING HIM!
SHE'S... RIGHT, *SENHOR*. I... CAN'T CONTROL MY HUNGER... MUCH LONGER-- IT IS LIKE AN ANIMAL INSIDE ME, ALMOST MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!
IF WE WAIT TO BE CERTAIN WHAT WE DO IS RIGHT, IT'LL BE *TOO LATE*!
*AND IN A FAR CORNER...*
IT'S THE SAME AS THE NIGHT MY BEST FRIEND *BILLY* GOT SHOT.
I HAD A CHANCE TO SAVE HIM-- ONLY I COULDN'T SAY THE *WORDS!* HE TRUSTED ME, COUNTED ON ME, AN' MY STUTTERING *KILLED HIM!*
IT'S *MY* FAULT HE DIED, *MY* FAULT BOBBY'S IN THIS FIX-- AN' EVEN IF I *KNEW* HOW TO PUT THINGS RIGHT, I'M NOT SURE I COULD. I DON'T HAVE THE GUTS. NEVER DID-- PROB'LY NEVER WILL.
HOW CAN A BODY BE SO SCARED, AN' STILL BE ALIVE?!
WHAT'M I GONNA DO, *WHAT'M I GONNA DO?!?*
*AND THE SHADOW MOVES CLOSER, GROWS DARKER...*

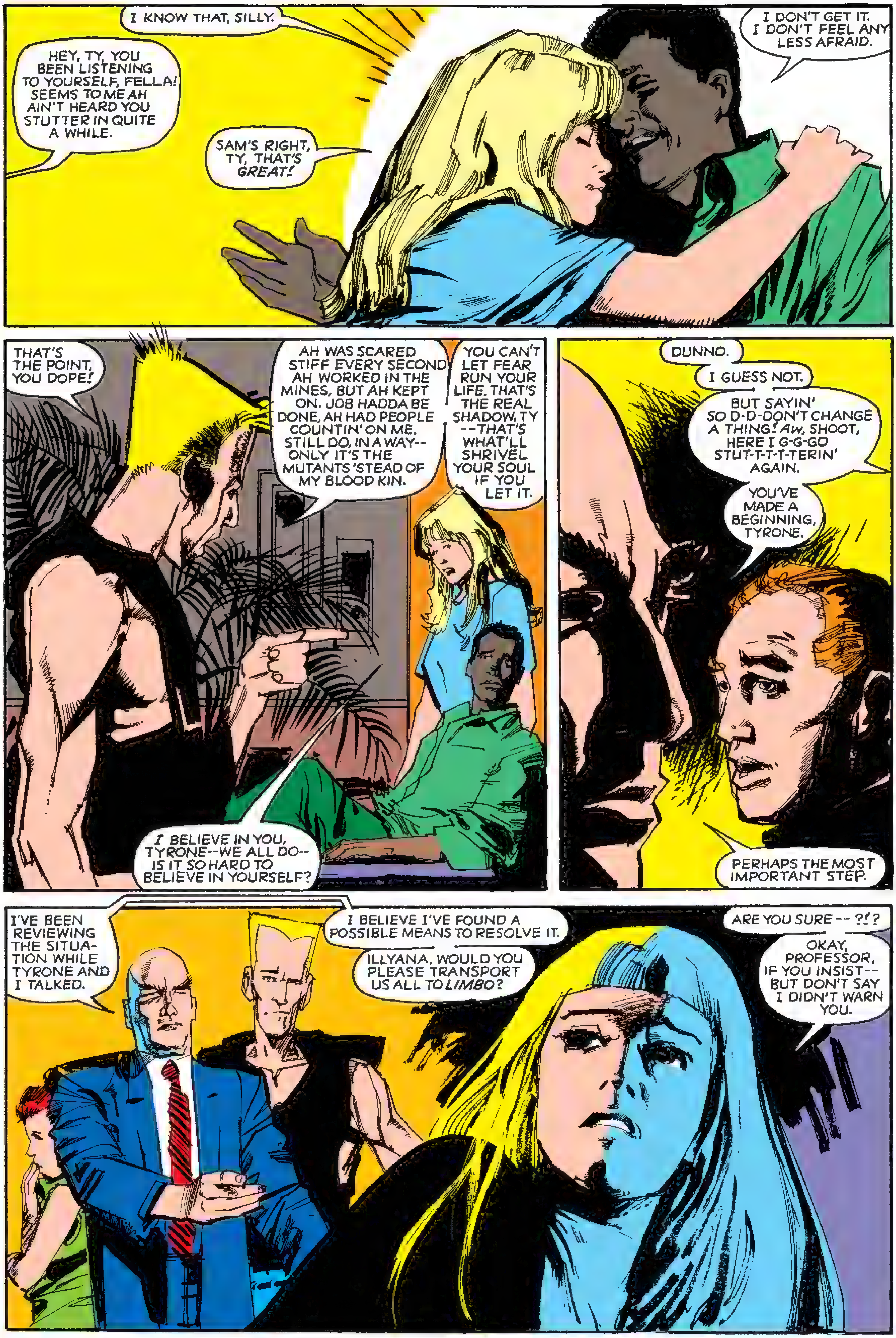

MAY I JOIN YOU, TYRONE?
H-HUH?!!
XAVIER'S VOICE-- I HEAR IT INSIDE MY *HEAD!*
I AM A TELEPATH.
A MIND-READER!
YOU'VE NOTHING TO FEAR, LAD. I GIVE MY WORD, I WILL NOT PRY INTO YOUR THOUGHTS. I MERELY WISH TO TALK WITH YOU.
'S'A F-F-FREE COUNTRY, MAN--HEY, YOU *ARE* A M-M-MAN, RIGHT?
THIS IS *STUPID*-- I'M T-T-TALKIN' TO A GHOST, A G-G-GUY WHO AIN'T HARDLY EVEN THERE!
IS IT ANY MORE ABSURD, TYRONE, THAN A YOUNG MAN MADE OF SHADOW, OR A WOMAN OF LIGHT?
WHAT YOU SEE IS AN ASTRAL PROJECTION OF MY CONSCIOUSNESS. WOULD YOU RATHER I CAME OVER TO SPEAK IN PERSON?
NO-- S'OKAY.
PROFESSOR--?!??
THAT CORNER'S SO SHADOWY--AND I SENSE AN ELDRITCH CHILL--!
I KNOW, ILLYANA--
I SUSPECT TYRONE IS NOT SO FREE OF HIS POWER AS HE BELIEVES.
AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, I DON'T THINK HE OR I ARE IN ANY DANGER. YOU MAY KEEP WATCH, BUT DO NOT INTERFERE.
YOUR STUDENTS S-S-SAY YOU KNOW EVERYTHING.
THEY EXAGGERATE.
THEN WHAT THE HECK G-G-GOOD YOU GONNA BE FOR ME'N' TANDY--
--OR YOUR OWN K-K-KIDS, *HUH?*

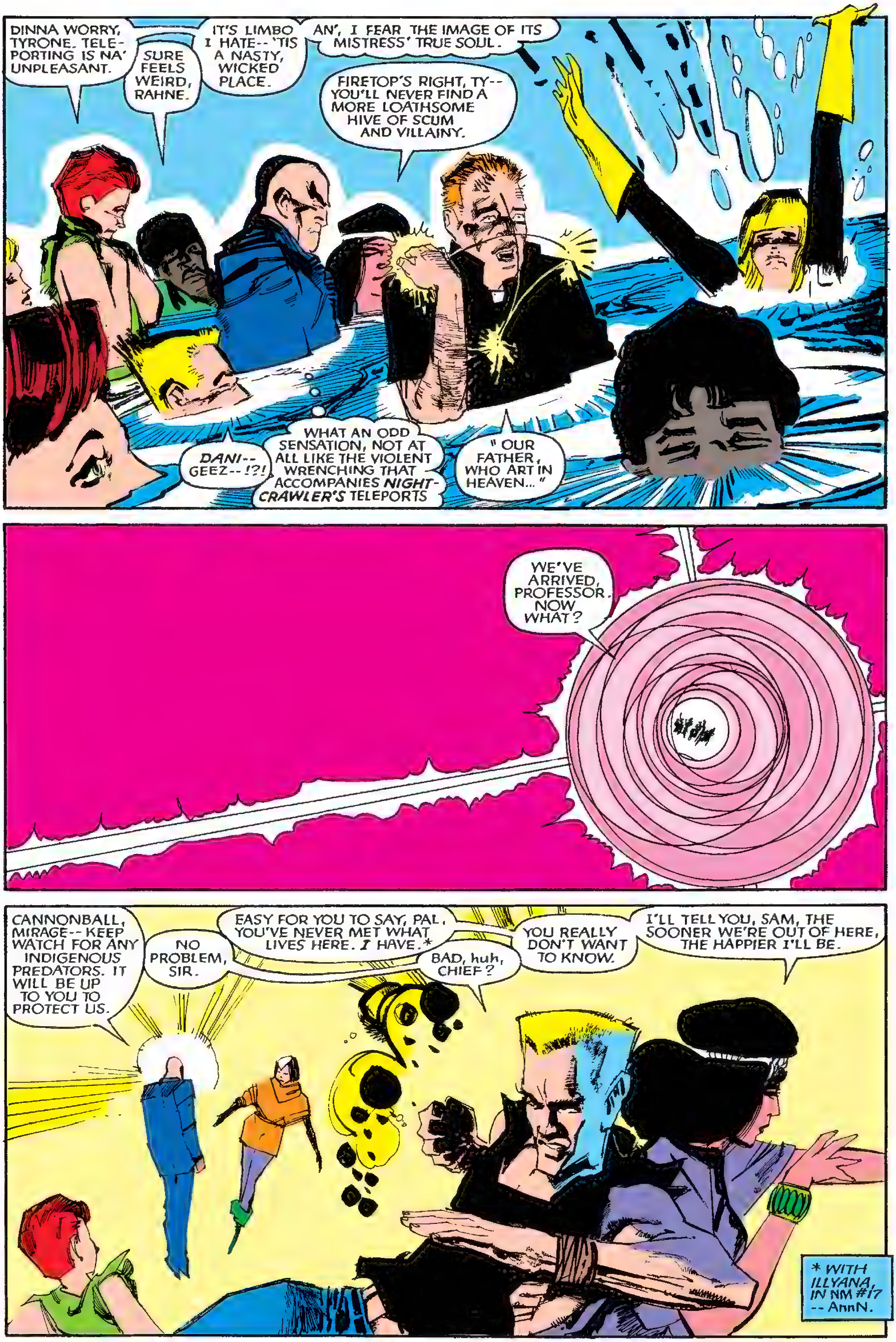

I REMEMBER THE FIRST THOUGHT I EVER "HEARD." IT WAS MY STEP-BROTHER, CAIN MARKO, CRYING IN HIS ROOM NEXT DOOR TO MINE. HE'D BEEN BADLY BEATEN BY HIS FATHER.
I'D NEVER FELT SUCH UTTER MISERY-- IT WAS FAR WORSE THAN ANY PURELY PHYSICAL PAIN--I WANTED TO MAKE IT GO AWAY, BUT WHEN I TRIED...
...ALL I MANAGED TO DO WAS THRUST MYSELF DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO CAIN'S MIND. IT WAS AWFUL. I WAS YOUNG AND SCARED-- HEARING THOUGHTS, EXPERIENCING TERRIBLE MEMORIES THAT WERE NOT MY OWN-- I DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS HAPPENING OR HOW TO MAKE IT STOP. CAIN SENSED MY PRESENCE--HE BELIEVES TO THIS DAY THAT I DID IT DELIBERATELY--I HAD DISCOVERED HIS SECRET SHAME AND HE NEVER FORGAVE ME FOR IT.
AFTER THAT, NOT ONLY CAIN'S THOUGHTS BUT EVERYONE'S WERE OPEN TO ME. I VERY NEARLY WENT MAD BEFORE I LEARNED TO CONTROL MY TALENT. THERE WAS SO MUCH HURT IN OUR HOUSE IN THOSE DAYS, ALL I COULD SENSE WERE DARK AND UGLY THINGS-- HOW SAD THAT OUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS ALWAYS SEEM TO BE STRONGER AND MORE PREVALENT THAN THE GENTLER ASPECTS OF OUR NATURES. WE ARE CREATURES OF PASSION, YOU SEE, WHICH TOO OFTEN, REGRETTABLY, FINDS ITS EXPRESSION IN VIOLENCE.
I BELIEVED MY PSI-TALENT WAS THE MOST HORRIBLE CURSE IMAGINABLE, I WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYTHING TO GET RID OF IT. BUT, IN TIME, I CAME TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT WASN'T THE ABILITY THAT WAS CAUSING SUCH ANGUISH...
...IT WAS MY FEAR OF USING IT, AND OF WHAT IT MIGHT SHOW ME.
YOU SAYIN' ME AN' MY POWER AIN'T EVIL, IT'S JUST THAT I'M SCARED?! IT'S MY FEAR THAT MAKES ME DO BAD THINGS, TRY TO HURT PEOPLE?!
I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, TYRONE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR POWER IS. BUT I DO KNOW THAT YOU SEEMED ABLE TO COPE WITH IT, WHEREAS ROBERTO CANNOT.

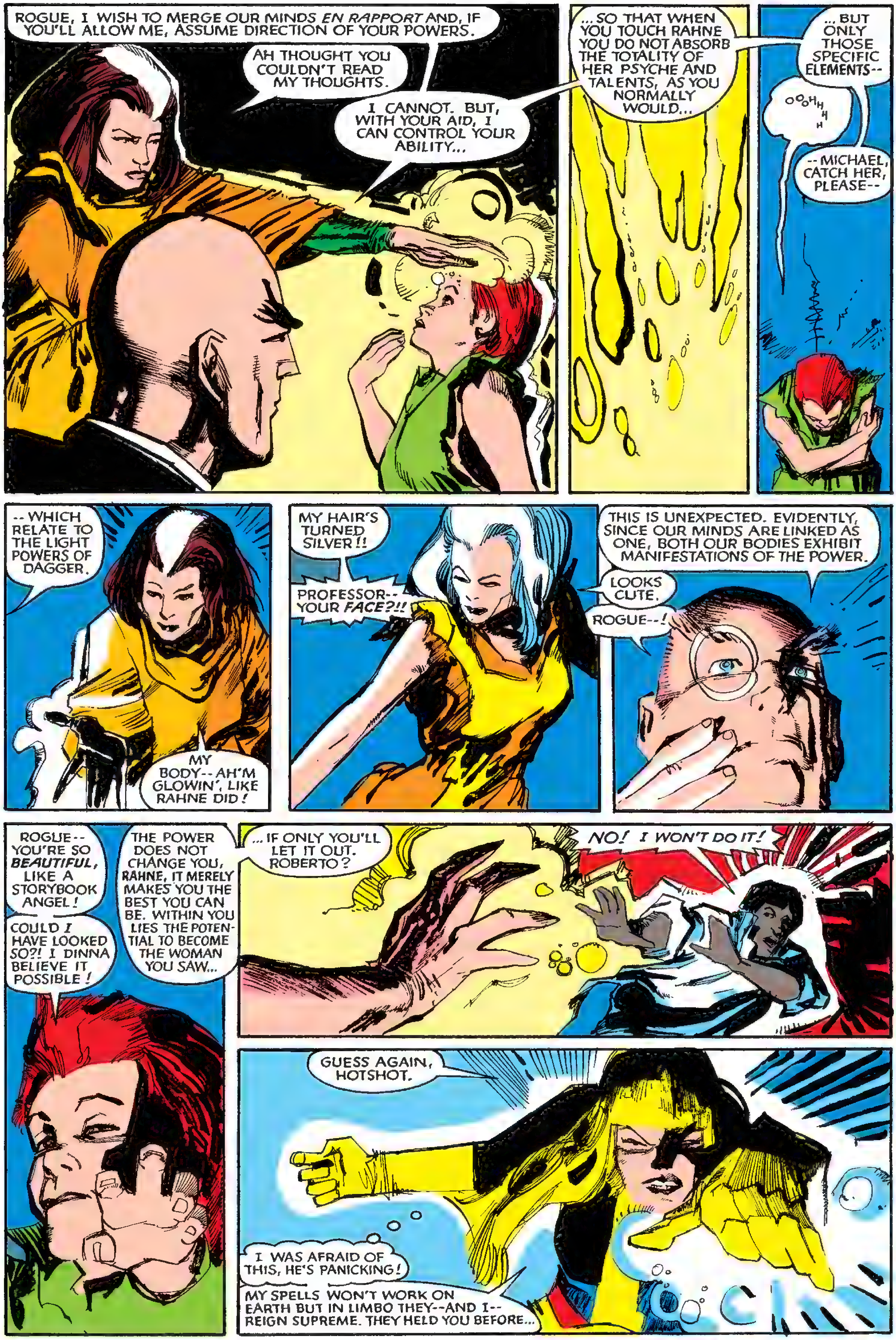

YOU JIVIN' ME, MAN?!! THE SHADOW WAS *WINNING!* I TRIED AN' TRIED TO FIGHT IT, TO HOLD IT BACK-- BUT I *COULDN'T!*
LEAVE HER OUTTA THIS!
*YOUR FEAR GAVE IT AN EDGE. FEAR OF WHAT YOU ARE, WHAT YOU WERE BECOMING, OF LOSING TANDY...*
*SHE IS A PART OF YOU, TYRONE, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY TO DENY IT--SO IMPORTANT YOU CANNOT BEAR TO EVEN* **THINK** *ABOUT HER. WHAT IS THAT IF NOT FEAR?*
*AND IT IS THOSE FEARS WHICH ARE DESTROYING YOU STILL, WITHOUT THE POWER. IF YOU ARE TO SURVIVE AND PROSPER AS TYRONE JOHNSON, MUCH LESS CLOAK...*
*...YOU* **MUST MASTER THEM!**

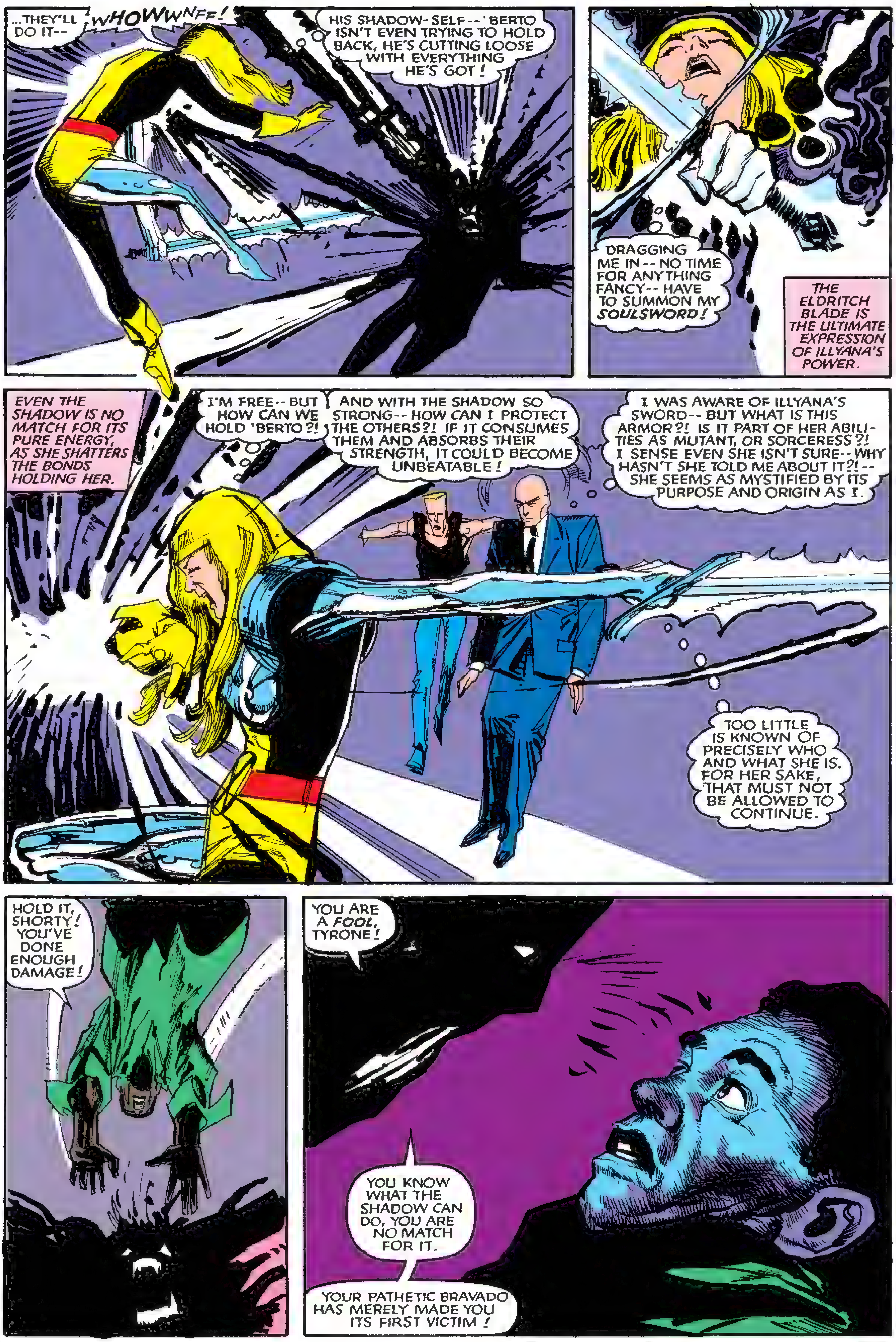

YOU PRIED OPEN THE BARS OF OUR PRISON CELL ON ELLIS ISLAND, TY, REMEMBER?
*TANDY!* YOU HEARD?
THE PROFESSOR LET ME LISTEN IN.
YOU HELPED ME SWIM ACROSS THE HARBOR. YOU GAVE EVERYTHING YOU HAD, WITHOUT HESITATION. YOU NEVER GAVE UP.
WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT NOW?

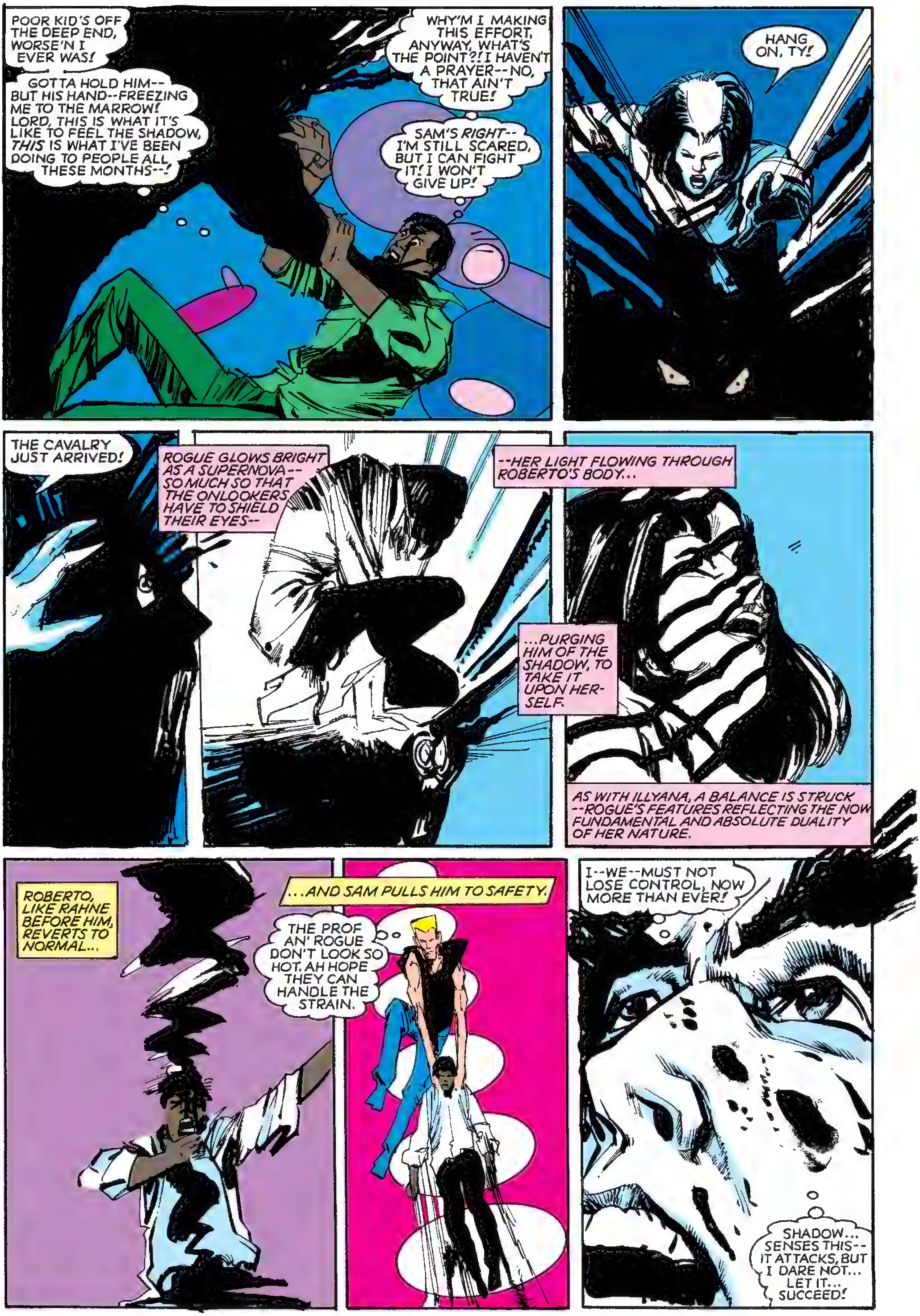

THAT WAS THEN. IT'S EASY TO BE BRAVE WHEN DUDES'RE SHOOTIN' AT YOU.
IT ISN'T, TYRONE. ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO IN A FIREFIGHT WAS RUN.
YOU'VE BEEN TO WAR, FATHER BOWEN, I GUESS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT. ME, I'M MORE CONFUSED THAN EVER.
I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I SAID BEFORE, TANDY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU. HECK, I'D DIE FIRST.

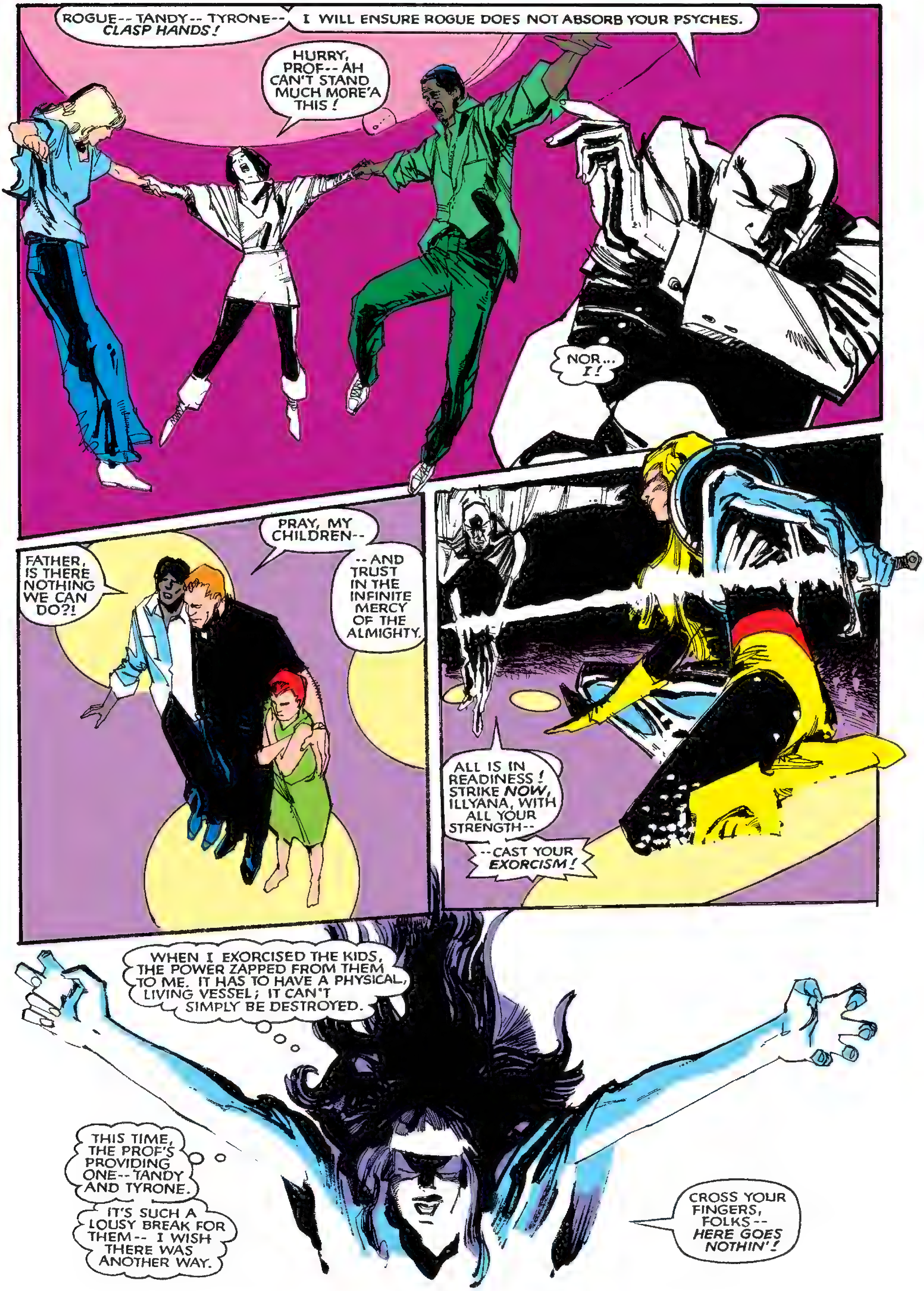

I KNOW THAT, SILLY.
HEY, TY, YOU BEEN LISTENING TO YOURSELF, FELLA! SEEMS TO ME AH AIN'T HEARD YOU STUTTER IN QUITE A WHILE.
SAM'S RIGHT, TY, THAT'S *GREAT!*
I DON'T GET IT. I DON'T FEEL ANY LESS AFRAID.
THAT'S THE POINT, YOU DOPE!
AH WAS SCARED STIFF EVERY SECOND AH WORKED IN THE MINES, BUT AH KEPT ON. JOB HADDA BE DONE, AH HAD PEOPLE COUNTIN' ON ME. STILL DO, IN A WAY-- ONLY IT'S THE MUTANTS 'STEAD OF MY BLOOD KIN.
YOU CAN'T LET FEAR RUN YOUR LIFE. THAT'S THE REAL SHADOW, TY --THAT'S WHAT'LL SHRIVEL YOUR SOUL IF YOU LET IT.
*I* BELIEVE IN YOU, TYRONE--WE ALL DO-- IS IT SO HARD TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF?
DUNNO.
I GUESS NOT.
BUT SAYIN' SO D-D-DON'T CHANGE A THING! *Aw,* SHOOT, HERE I G-G-GO STUT-T-T-T-TERIN' AGAIN.
YOU'VE MADE A BEGINNING, TYRONE.
PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP.
I'VE BEEN REVIEWING THE SITUATION WHILE TYRONE AND I TALKED.
I BELIEVE I'VE FOUND A POSSIBLE MEANS TO RESOLVE IT.
ILLYANA, WOULD YOU PLEASE TRANSPORT US ALL TO *LIMBO*?
ARE YOU SURE -- ?!?
OKAY, PROFESSOR, IF YOU INSIST-- BUT DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.

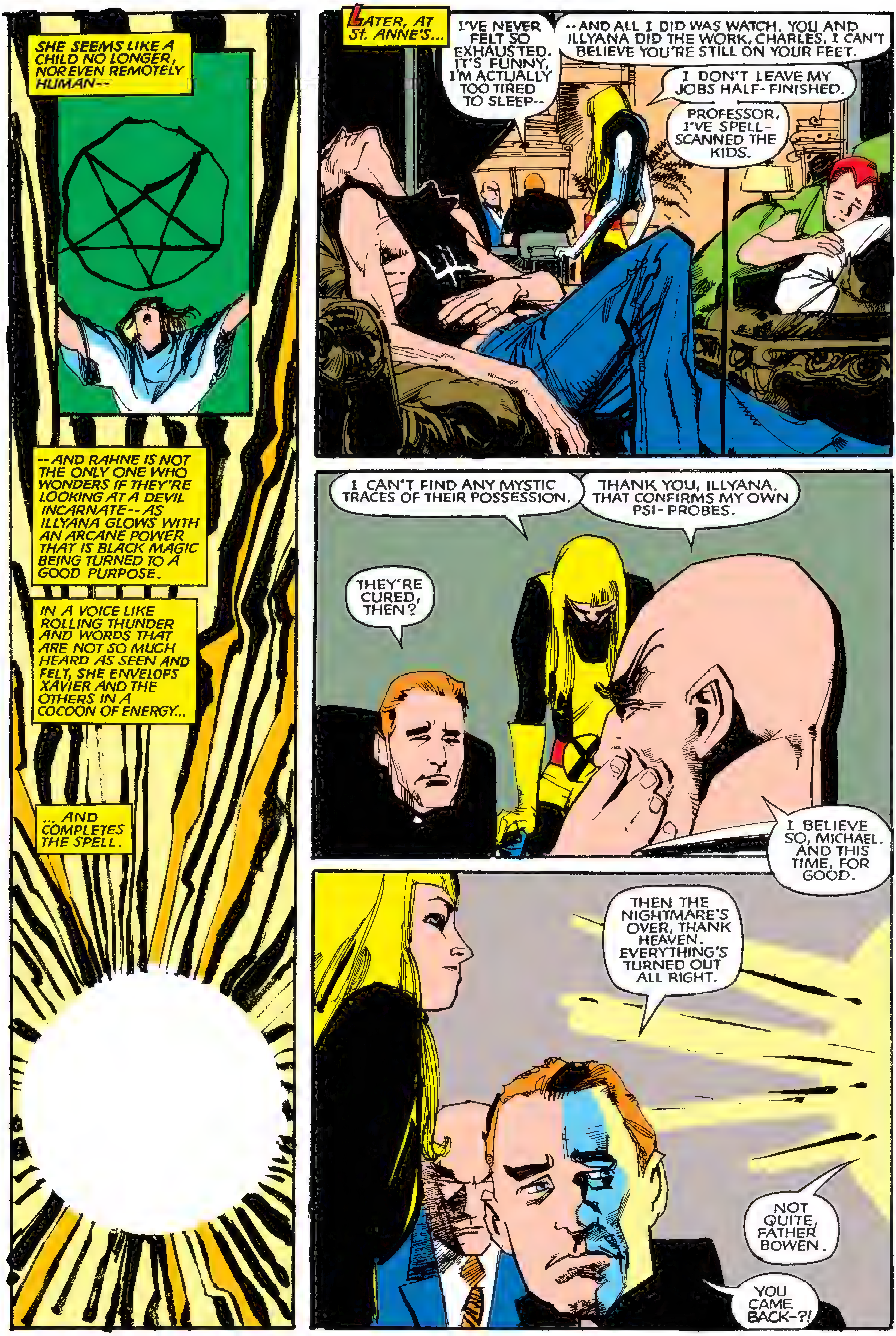

DINNA WORRY, TYRONE. TELEPORTING IS NA' UNPLEASANT.
SURE FEELS WEIRD, RAHNE.
IT'S LIMBO I HATE-- 'TIS A NASTY, WICKED PLACE.
AN', I FEAR THE IMAGE OF ITS MISTRESS' TRUE SOUL.
FIRETOP'S RIGHT, TY-- YOU'LL NEVER FIND A MORE LOATHSOME HIVE OF SCUM AND VILLAINY.
*DANI*-- GEEZ-- *!?!*
WHAT AN ODD SENSATION, NOT AT ALL LIKE THE VIOLENT WRENCHING THAT ACCOMPANIES *NIGHTCRAWLER'S* TELEPORTS
" OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN... "
WE'VE ARRIVED, PROFESSOR. NOW WHAT?
CANNONBALL, MIRAGE-- KEEP WATCH FOR ANY INDIGENOUS PREDATORS. IT WILL BE UP TO YOU TO PROTECT US.
NO PROBLEM, SIR.
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, PAL. YOU'VE NEVER MET WHAT LIVES HERE. *I* HAVE.*
BAD, huh, CHIEF?
YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
I'LL TELL YOU, SAM, THE SOONER WE'RE OUT OF HERE, THE HAPPIER I'LL BE.
* *WITH ILLYANA, IN NM #17* -- AnnN.

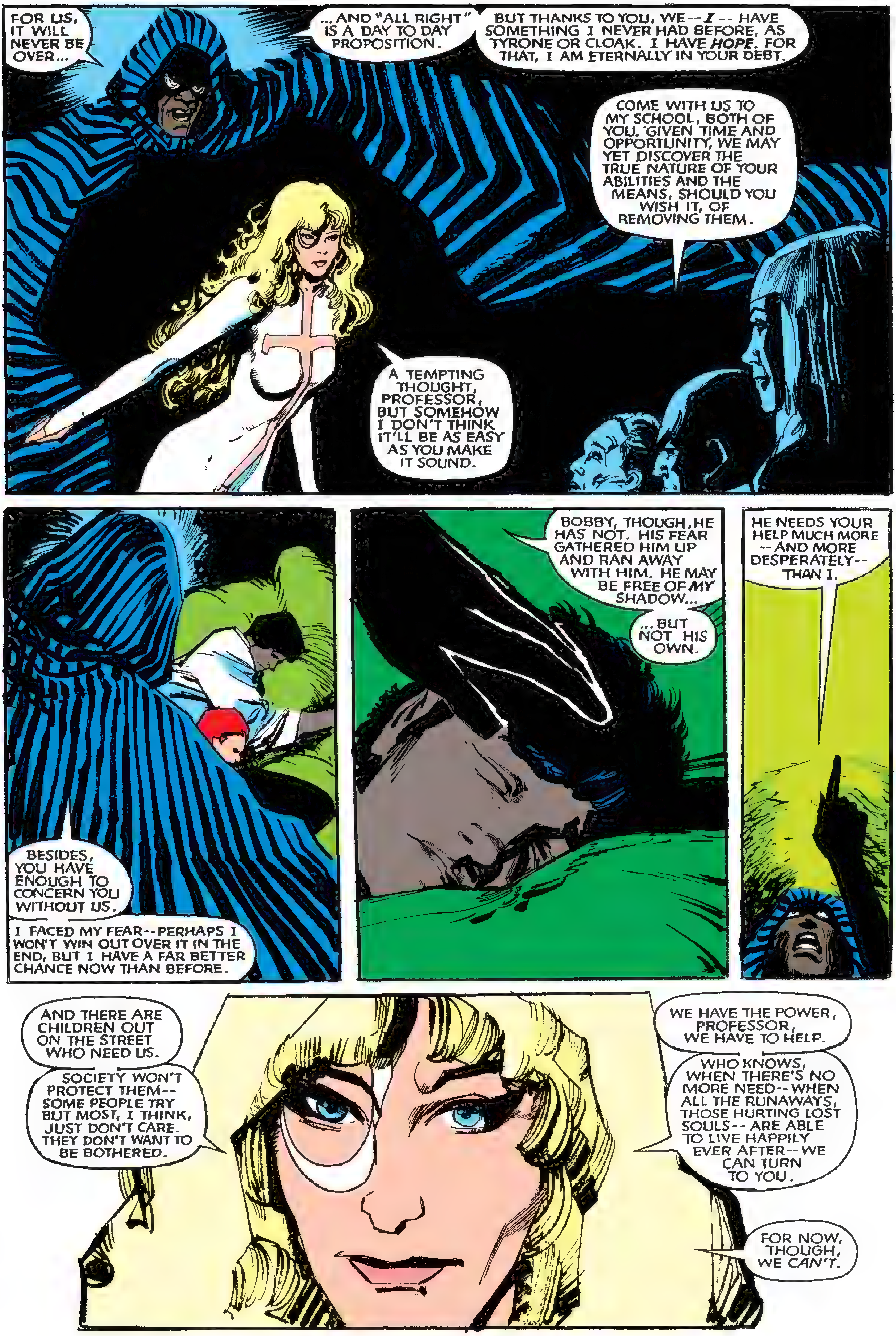

ROGUE, I WISH TO MERGE OUR MINDS *EN RAPPORT* AND, IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, ASSUME DIRECTION OF YOUR POWERS.
AH THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T READ MY THOUGHTS.
I CANNOT. BUT, WITH YOUR AID, I CAN CONTROL YOUR ABILITY...
...SO THAT WHEN YOU TOUCH RAHNE YOU DO NOT ABSORB THE TOTALITY OF HER PSYCHE AND TALENTS, AS YOU NORMALLY WOULD...
...BUT ONLY THOSE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS--
OOOHHHH
--MICHAEL, CATCH HER, PLEASE--
--WHICH RELATE TO THE LIGHT POWERS OF DAGGER.
MY BODY--AH'M GLOWIN', LIKE RAHNE DID!
MY HAIR'S TURNED SILVER!!
PROFESSOR--YOUR *FACE?!!*
THIS IS UNEXPECTED. EVIDENTLY, SINCE OUR MINDS ARE LINKED AS ONE, BOTH OUR BODIES EXHIBIT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE POWER.
LOOKS CUTE.
ROGUE--!
ROGUE--YOU'RE SO ***BEAUTIFUL,*** LIKE A STORYBOOK ANGEL!
COULD *I* HAVE LOOKED SO?! I DINNA BELIEVE IT POSSIBLE!
THE POWER DOES NOT CHANGE YOU, RAHNE, IT MERELY MAKES YOU THE BEST YOU CAN BE. WITHIN YOU LIES THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME THE WOMAN YOU SAW...
...IF ONLY YOU'LL LET IT OUT. ROBERTO?
*NO! I WON'T DO IT!*
GUESS AGAIN, HOTSHOT.
I WAS AFRAID OF THIS, HE'S PANICKING!
MY SPELLS WON'T WORK ON EARTH BUT IN LIMBO THEY--AND I--REIGN SUPREME. THEY HELD YOU BEFORE...

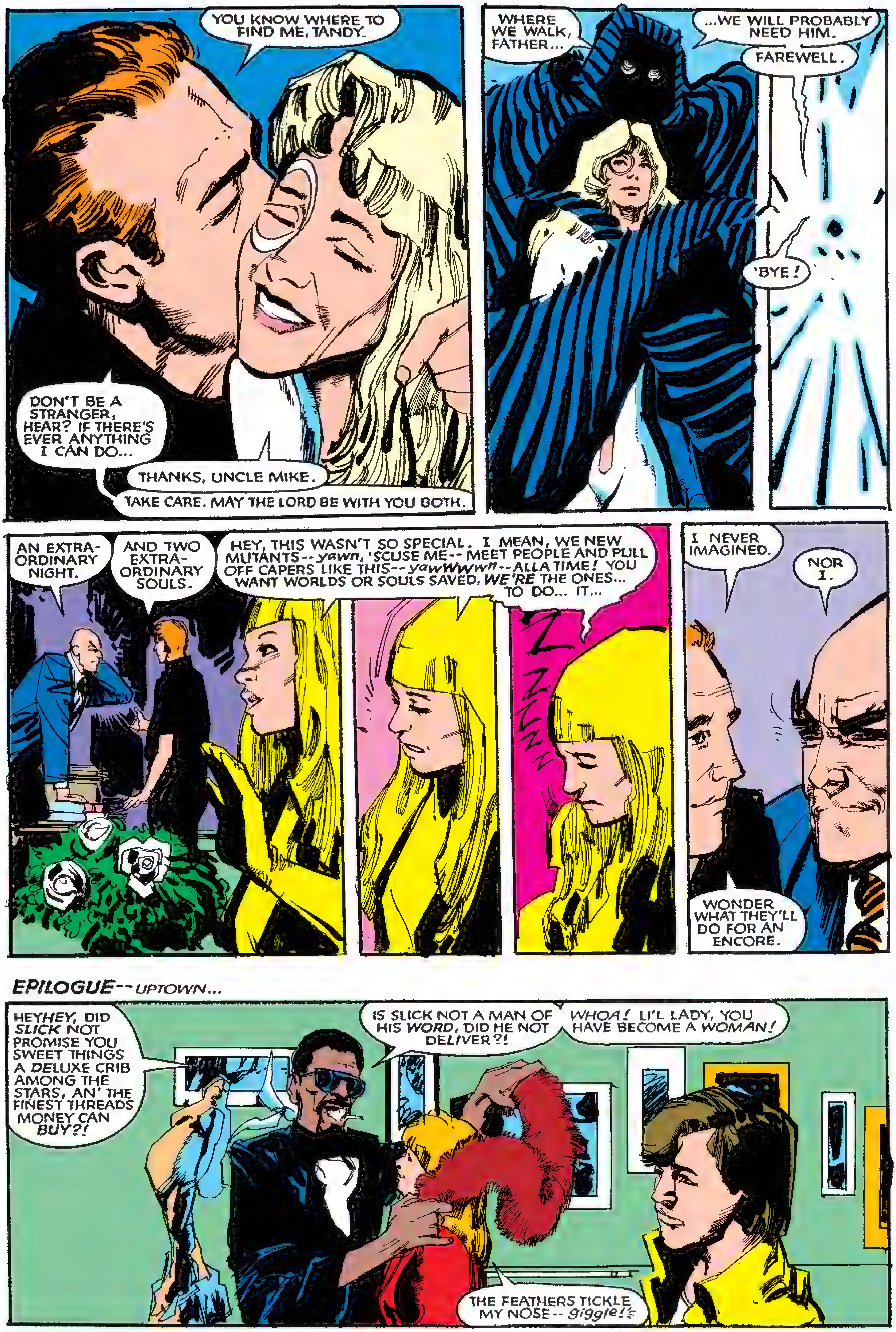

...THEY'LL DO IT--
WHOWWNFF!
HIS SHADOW-SELF--'BERTO ISN'T EVEN TRYING TO HOLD BACK, HE'S CUTTING LOOSE WITH EVERYTHING HE'S GOT!
DRAGGING ME IN--NO TIME FOR ANYTHING FANCY--HAVE TO SUMMON MY *SOULSWORD!*
*THE ELDRITCH BLADE IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF ILLYANA'S POWER.*
*EVEN THE SHADOW IS NO MATCH FOR ITS PURE ENERGY, AS SHE SHATTERS THE BONDS HOLDING HER.*
I'M FREE--BUT HOW CAN WE HOLD 'BERTO?!
AND WITH THE SHADOW SO STRONG--HOW CAN I PROTECT THE OTHERS?! IF IT CONSUMES THEM AND ABSORBS THEIR STRENGTH, IT COULD BECOME UNBEATABLE!
I WAS AWARE OF ILLYANA'S SWORD--BUT WHAT IS THIS ARMOR?! IS IT PART OF HER ABILITIES AS MUTANT, OR SORCERESS?! I SENSE EVEN SHE ISN'T SURE--WHY HASN'T SHE TOLD ME ABOUT IT?!--SHE SEEMS AS MYSTIFIED BY ITS PURPOSE AND ORIGIN AS I.
TOO LITTLE IS KNOWN OF PRECISELY WHO AND WHAT SHE IS. FOR HER SAKE, THAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.
HOLD IT, SHORTY! YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH DAMAGE!
YOU ARE A *FOOL,* TYRONE!
YOU KNOW WHAT THE SHADOW CAN DO, YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR IT.
YOUR PATHETIC BRAVADO HAS MERELY MADE YOU ITS FIRST VICTIM!

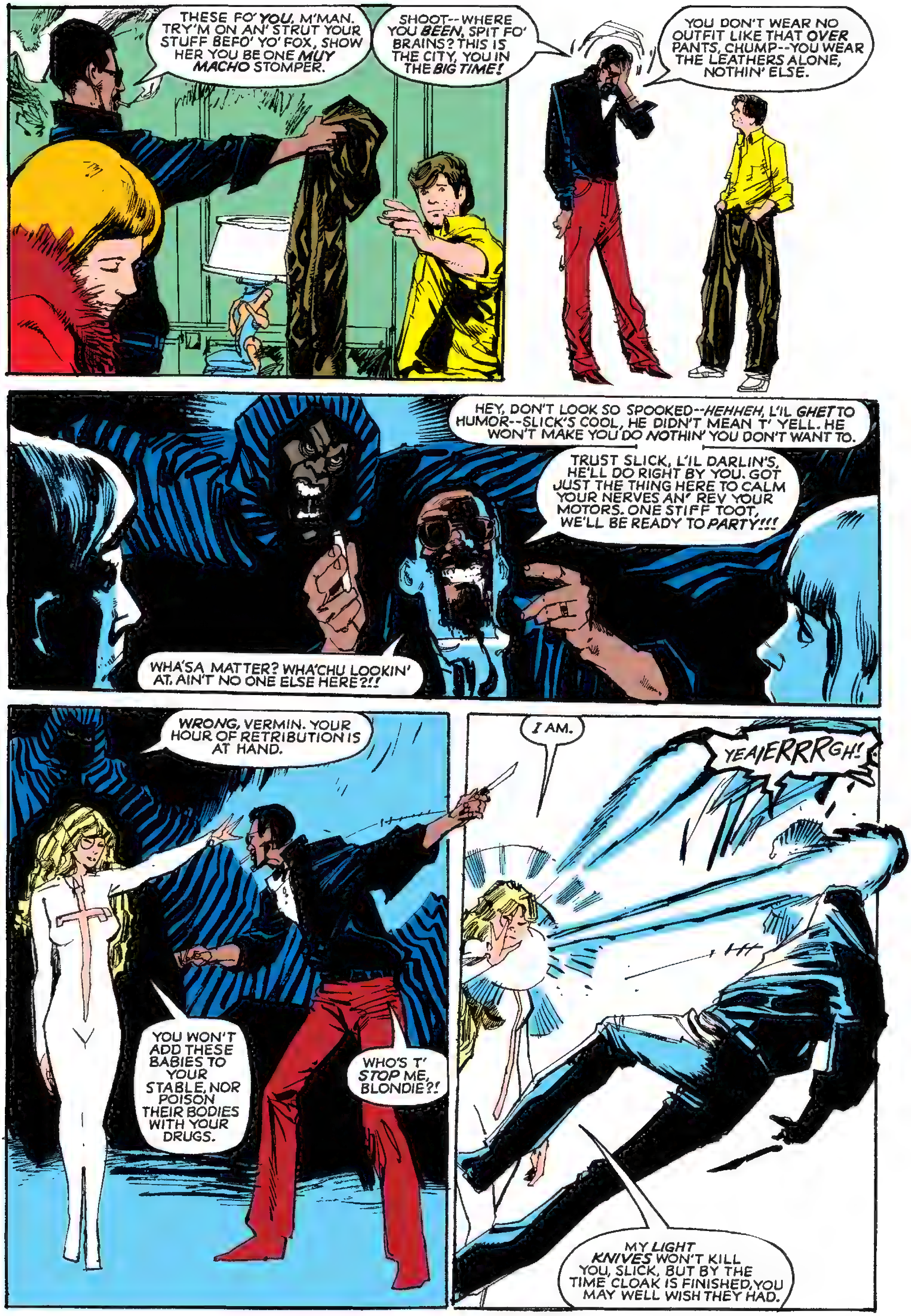

POOR KID'S OFF THE DEEP END, WORSE'N I EVER WAS!
GOTTA HOLD HIM-- BUT HIS HAND--FREEZING ME TO THE MARROW! LORD, THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL THE SHADOW, *THIS* IS WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING TO PEOPLE ALL THESE MONTHS--!
WHY'M I MAKING THIS EFFORT, ANYWAY, WHAT'S THE POINT?! I HAVEN'T A PRAYER--NO, THAT AIN'T TRUE!
SAM'S *RIGHT*-- I'M STILL SCARED, BUT I CAN FIGHT IT! I WON'T GIVE UP!
HANG ON, TY!
THE CAVALRY JUST ARRIVED!
ROGUE GLOWS BRIGHT AS A SUPERNOVA-- SO MUCH SO THAT THE ONLOOKERS HAVE TO SHIELD THEIR EYES--
--HER LIGHT FLOWING THROUGH ROBERTO'S BODY...
...PURGING HIM OF THE SHADOW, TO TAKE IT UPON HERSELF.
AS WITH ILLYANA, A BALANCE IS STRUCK --ROGUE'S FEATURES REFLECTING THE NOW FUNDAMENTAL AND ABSOLUTE DUALITY OF HER NATURE.
ROBERTO, LIKE RAHNE BEFORE HIM, REVERTS TO NORMAL...
...AND SAM PULLS HIM TO SAFETY.
THE PROF AN' ROGUE DON'T LOOK SO HOT. AH HOPE THEY CAN HANDLE THE STRAIN.
I--WE--MUST NOT LOSE CONTROL, NOW MORE THAN EVER!
SHADOW... SENSES THIS-- IT ATTACKS, BUT I DARE NOT... LET IT... SUCCEED!

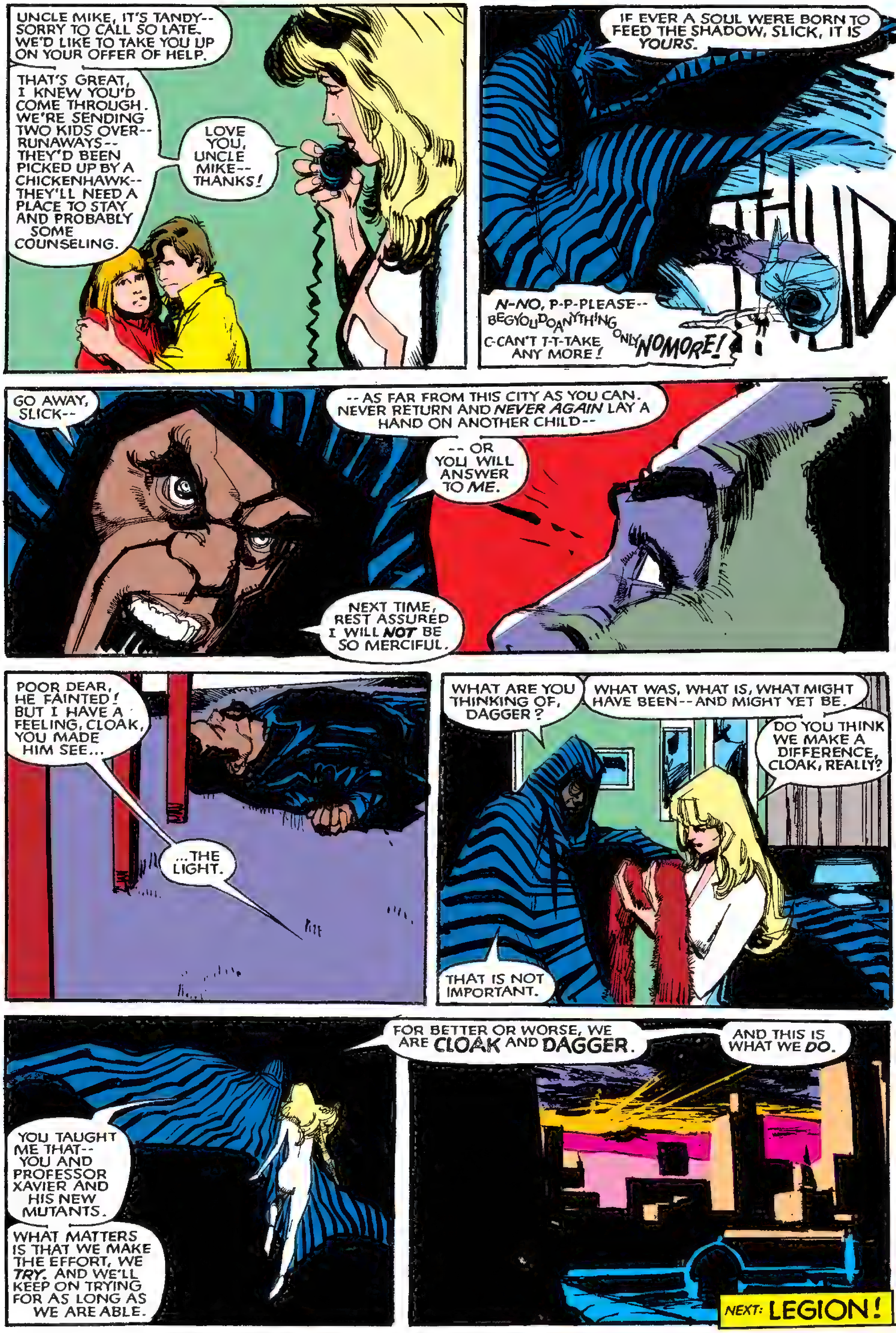

ROGUE-- TANDY-- TYRONE-- CLASP HANDS!
I WILL ENSURE ROGUE DOES NOT ABSORB YOUR PSYCHES.
HURRY, PROF-- AH CAN'T STAND MUCH MORE'A THIS!
NOR... I!
FATHER, IS THERE NOTHING WE CAN DO?!
PRAY, MY CHILDREN--
--AND TRUST IN THE INFINITE MERCY OF THE ALMIGHTY.
ALL IS IN READINESS! STRIKE NOW, ILLYANA, WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH--
--CAST YOUR EXORCISM!
WHEN I EXORCISED THE KIDS, THE POWER ZAPPED FROM THEM TO ME. IT HAS TO HAVE A PHYSICAL, LIVING VESSEL; IT CAN'T SIMPLY BE DESTROYED.
THIS TIME, THE PROF'S PROVIDING ONE-- TANDY AND TYRONE.
IT'S SUCH A LOUSY BREAK FOR THEM-- I WISH THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY.
CROSS YOUR FINGERS, FOLKS-- HERE GOES NOTHIN'!

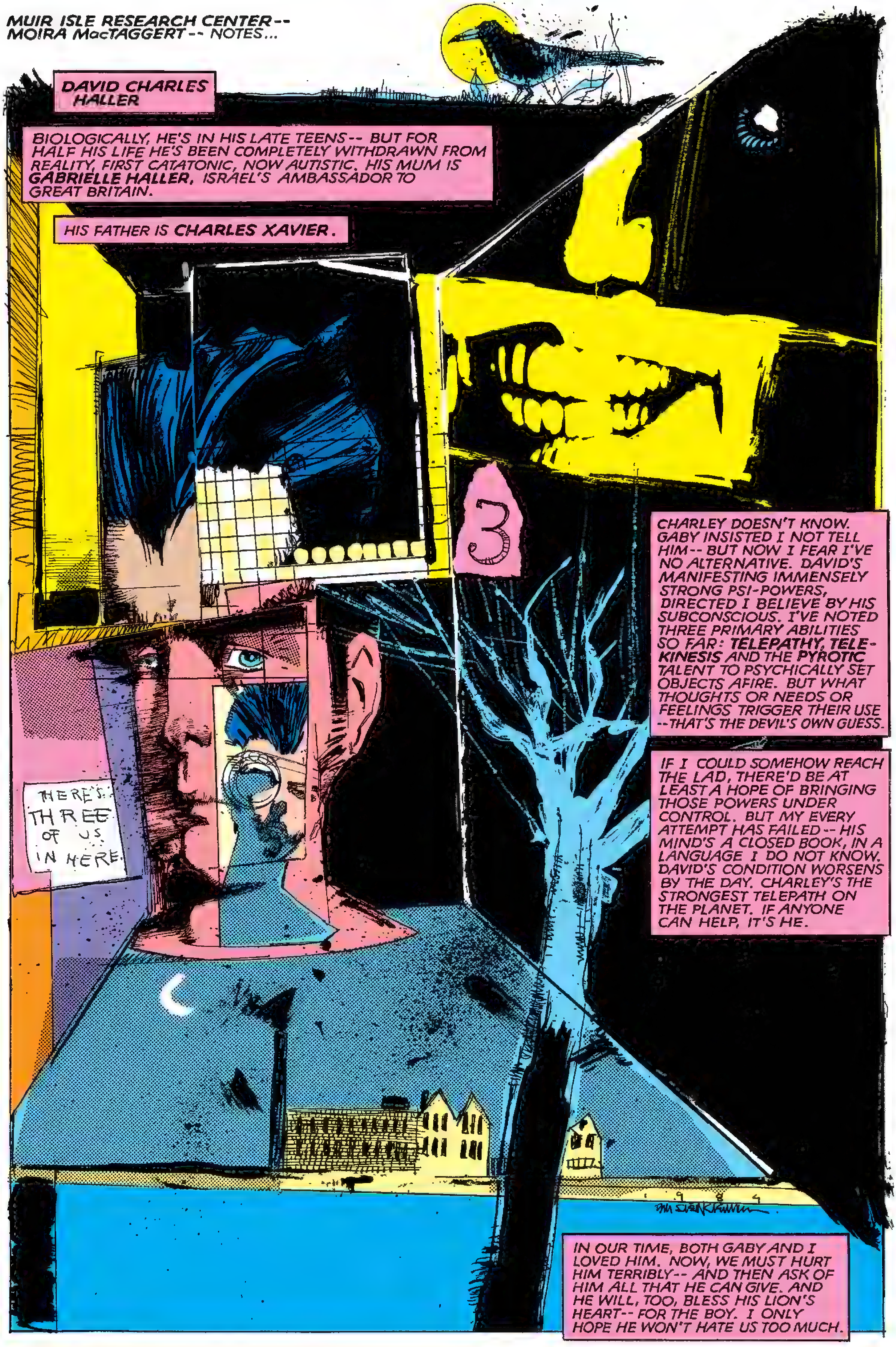

SHE SEEMS LIKE A CHILD NO LONGER, NOR EVEN REMOTELY HUMAN--
--AND RAHNE IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WONDERS IF THEY'RE LOOKING AT A DEVIL INCARNATE-- AS ILLYANA GLOWS WITH AN ARCANE POWER THAT IS BLACK MAGIC BEING TURNED TO A GOOD PURPOSE.
IN A VOICE LIKE ROLLING THUNDER AND WORDS THAT ARE NOT SO MUCH HEARD AS SEEN AND FELT, SHE ENVELOPS XAVIER AND THE OTHERS IN A COCOON OF ENERGY...
... AND COMPLETES THE SPELL.
LATER, AT St. ANNE'S...
I'VE NEVER FELT SO EXHAUSTED. IT'S FUNNY, I'M ACTUALLY TOO TIRED TO SLEEP--
--AND ALL I DID WAS WATCH. YOU AND ILLYANA DID THE WORK, CHARLES, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL ON YOUR FEET.
I DON'T LEAVE MY JOBS HALF-FINISHED.
PROFESSOR, I'VE SPELL-SCANNED THE KIDS.
I CAN'T FIND ANY MYSTIC TRACES OF THEIR POSSESSION.
THANK YOU, ILLYANA. THAT CONFIRMS MY OWN PSI-PROBES.
THEY'RE CURED, THEN?
I BELIEVE SO, MICHAEL. AND THIS TIME, FOR GOOD.
THEN THE NIGHTMARE'S OVER, THANK HEAVEN. EVERYTHING'S TURNED OUT ALL RIGHT.
NOT QUITE, FATHER BOWEN.
YOU CAME BACK--?!

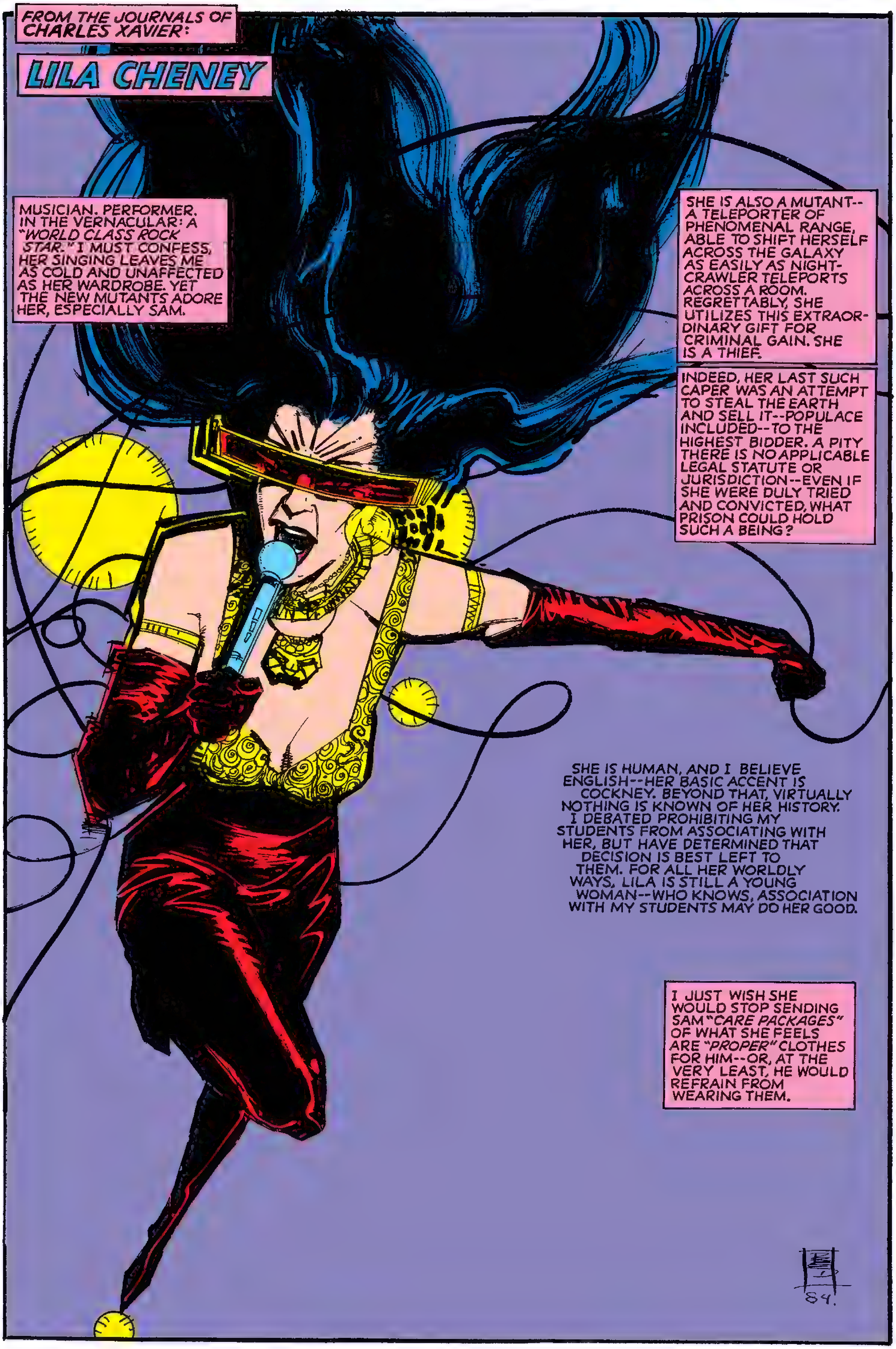

FOR US, IT WILL NEVER BE OVER...
... AND "ALL RIGHT" IS A DAY TO DAY PROPOSITION.
BUT THANKS TO YOU, WE-- *I* -- HAVE SOMETHING I NEVER HAD BEFORE, AS TYRONE OR CLOAK. I HAVE *HOPE*. FOR THAT, I AM ETERNALLY IN YOUR DEBT.
COME WITH US TO MY SCHOOL, BOTH OF YOU. GIVEN TIME AND OPPORTUNITY, WE MAY YET DISCOVER THE TRUE NATURE OF YOUR ABILITIES AND THE MEANS, SHOULD YOU WISH IT, OF REMOVING THEM.
A TEMPTING THOUGHT, PROFESSOR, BUT SOMEHOW I DON'T THINK IT'LL BE AS EASY AS YOU MAKE IT SOUND.
BESIDES, YOU HAVE ENOUGH TO CONCERN YOU WITHOUT US.
I FACED MY FEAR--PERHAPS I WON'T WIN OUT OVER IT IN THE END, BUT I HAVE A FAR BETTER CHANCE NOW THAN BEFORE.
BOBBY, THOUGH, HE HAS NOT. HIS FEAR GATHERED HIM UP AND RAN AWAY WITH HIM. HE MAY BE FREE OF *MY* SHADOW...
... BUT NOT HIS OWN.
HE NEEDS YOUR HELP MUCH MORE --AND MORE DESPERATELY-- THAN I.
AND THERE ARE CHILDREN OUT ON THE STREET WHO NEED US.
SOCIETY WON'T PROTECT THEM-- SOME PEOPLE *TRY* BUT MOST, I THINK, JUST DON'T CARE. THEY DON'T WANT TO BE BOTHERED.
WE HAVE THE POWER, PROFESSOR, WE HAVE TO HELP.
WHO KNOWS, WHEN THERE'S NO MORE NEED-- WHEN ALL THE RUNAWAYS, THOSE HURTING LOST SOULS-- ARE ABLE TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER--WE CAN TURN TO YOU.
FOR NOW, THOUGH, WE *CAN'T*.

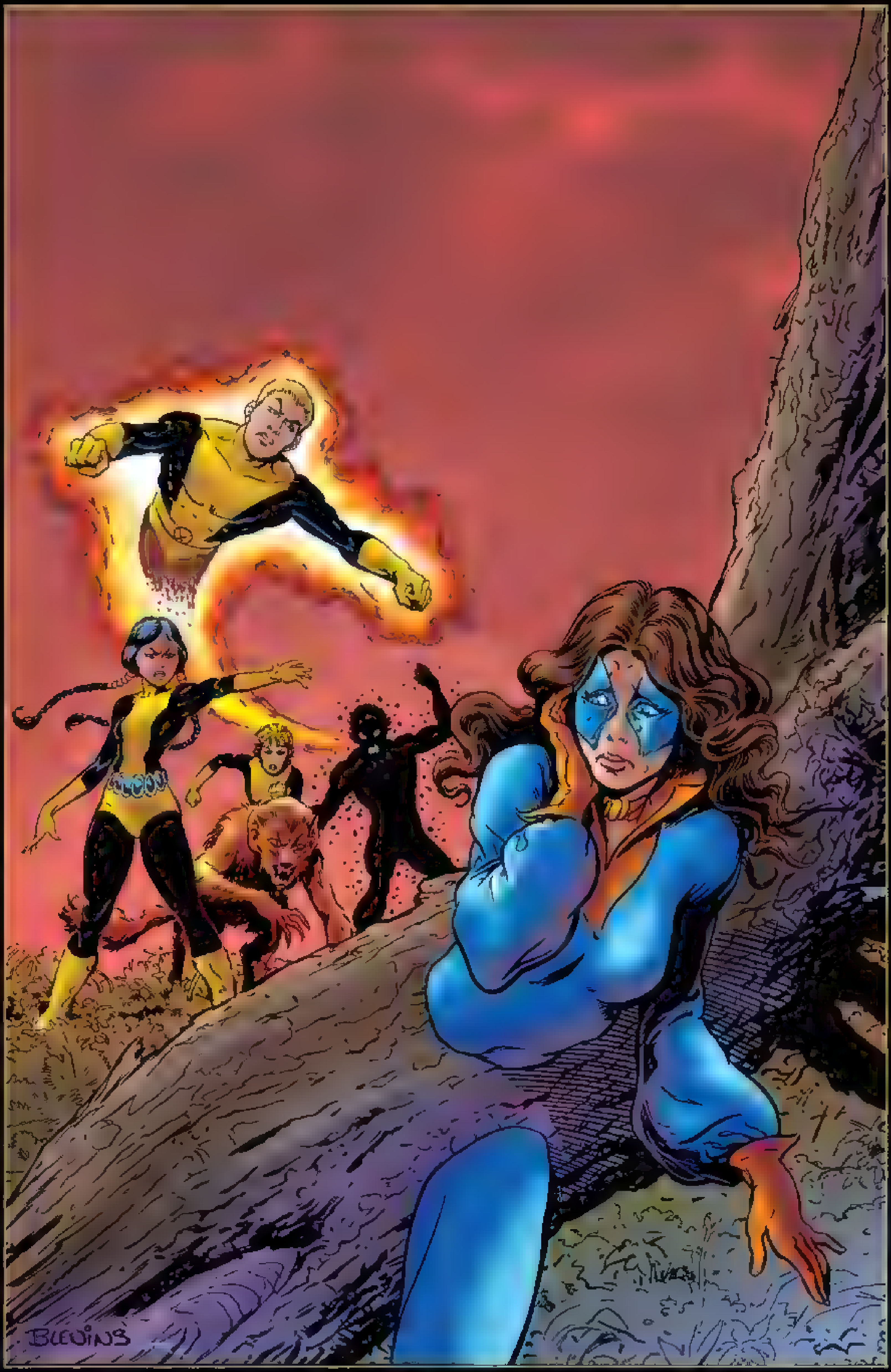

YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME, TANDY.
DON'T BE A STRANGER, HEAR? IF THERE'S EVER ANYTHING I CAN DO...
THANKS, UNCLE MIKE.
TAKE CARE. MAY THE LORD BE WITH YOU BOTH.
WHERE WE WALK, FATHER...
...WE WILL PROBABLY NEED HIM.
FAREWELL.
'BYE!
AN EXTRA-ORDINARY NIGHT.
AND TWO EXTRA-ORDINARY SOULS.
HEY, THIS WASN'T SO SPECIAL. I MEAN, WE NEW MUTANTS-- *yawn*, 'SCUSE ME-- MEET PEOPLE AND PULL OFF CAPERS LIKE THIS-- *yawWwwn*-- ALLA TIME! YOU WANT WORLDS OR SOULS SAVED, *WE'RE* THE ONES... TO DO... IT...
ZZZZ
I NEVER IMAGINED.
NOR I.
WONDER WHAT THEY'LL DO FOR AN ENCORE.
*EPILOGUE-- UPTOWN...*
HEY*HEY*, DID *SLICK* NOT PROMISE YOU SWEET THINGS A *DELUXE* CRIB AMONG THE STARS, AN' THE FINEST THREADS MONEY CAN *BUY?!*
IS SLICK NOT A MAN OF HIS *WORD*, DID HE NOT DE*LIVER*?!
*WHOA!* LI'L LADY, YOU HAVE BECOME A *WOMAN!*
THE FEATHERS TICKLE MY NOSE-- *giggle!*


THESE FO' YOU, M'MAN. TRY'M ON AN' STRUT YOUR STUFF BEFO' YO' FOX, SHOW HER YOU BE ONE MUY MACHO STOMPER.
SHOOT--WHERE YOU BEEN, SPIT FO' BRAINS? THIS IS THE CITY, YOU IN THE BIG TIME!
YOU DON'T WEAR NO OUTFIT LIKE THAT OVER PANTS, CHUMP--YOU WEAR THE LEATHERS ALONE, NOTHIN' ELSE.
HEY, DON'T LOOK SO SPOOKED--HEHHEH, L'IL GHETTO HUMOR--SLICK'S COOL, HE DIDN'T MEAN T' YELL. HE WON'T MAKE YOU DO NOTHIN' YOU DON'T WANT TO.
TRUST SLICK, L'IL DARLIN'S, HE'LL DO RIGHT BY YOU. GOT JUST THE THING HERE TO CALM YOUR NERVES AN' REV YOUR MOTORS. ONE STIFF TOOT, WE'LL BE READY TO PARTY!!!
WHA'SA MATTER? WHA'CHU LOOKIN' AT. AIN'T NO ONE ELSE HERE?!!
WRONG, VERMIN. YOUR HOUR OF RETRIBUTION IS AT HAND.
YOU WON'T ADD THESE BABIES TO YOUR STABLE, NOR POISON THEIR BODIES WITH YOUR DRUGS.
WHO'S T' STOP ME, BLONDIE?!
I AM.
YEAIERRRGH!
MY LIGHT KNIVES WON'T KILL YOU, SLICK, BUT BY THE TIME CLOAK IS FINISHED, YOU MAY WELL WISH THEY HAD.


UNCLE MIKE, IT'S TANDY-- SORRY TO CALL SO LATE. WE'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU UP ON YOUR OFFER OF HELP.
THAT'S GREAT, I KNEW YOU'D COME THROUGH. WE'RE SENDING TWO KIDS OVER-- RUNAWAYS-- THEY'D BEEN PICKED UP BY A CHICKENHAWK-- THEY'LL NEED A PLACE TO STAY AND PROBABLY SOME COUNSELING.
LOVE YOU, UNCLE MIKE-- THANKS!
IF EVER A SOUL WERE BORN TO FEED THE SHADOW, SLICK, IT IS YOURS.
THUD
N-NO, P-P-PLEASE-- BEG YOU DO ANYTHING C-CAN'T T-T-TAKE ANY MORE! ONLY NO MORE!
GO AWAY, SLICK--
--AS FAR FROM THIS CITY AS YOU CAN. NEVER RETURN AND NEVER AGAIN LAY A HAND ON ANOTHER CHILD--
--OR YOU WILL ANSWER TO ME.
NEXT TIME, REST ASSURED I WILL NOT BE SO MERCIFUL.
POOR DEAR, HE FAINTED! BUT I HAVE A FEELING, CLOAK, YOU MADE HIM SEE...
...THE LIGHT.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF, DAGGER?
WHAT WAS, WHAT IS, WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN--AND MIGHT YET BE.
DO YOU THINK WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE, CLOAK, REALLY?
THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT.
YOU TAUGHT ME THAT-- YOU AND PROFESSOR XAVIER AND HIS NEW MUTANTS.
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE MAKE THE EFFORT, WE TRY. AND WE'LL KEEP ON TRYING FOR AS LONG AS WE ARE ABLE.
FOR BETTER OR WORSE, WE ARE CLOAK AND DAGGER.
AND THIS IS WHAT WE DO.
NEXT: LEGION!


MUIR ISLE RESEARCH CENTER-- MOIRA MacTAGGERT -- NOTES...
DAVID CHARLES HALLER
BIOLOGICALLY, HE'S IN HIS LATE TEENS-- BUT FOR HALF HIS LIFE HE'S BEEN COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN FROM REALITY, FIRST CATATONIC, NOW AUTISTIC. HIS MUM IS GABRIELLE HALLER, ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN.
HIS FATHER IS CHARLES XAVIER.
3
CHARLEY DOESN'T KNOW. GABY INSISTED I NOT TELL HIM-- BUT NOW I FEAR I'VE NO ALTERNATIVE. DAVID'S MANIFESTING IMMENSELY STRONG PSI-POWERS, DIRECTED I BELIEVE BY HIS SUBCONSCIOUS. I'VE NOTED THREE PRIMARY ABILITIES SO FAR: TELEPATHY, TELEKINESIS AND THE PYROTIC TALENT TO PSYCHICALLY SET OBJECTS AFIRE. BUT WHAT THOUGHTS OR NEEDS OR FEELINGS TRIGGER THEIR USE --THAT'S THE DEVIL'S OWN GUESS.
THERE'S THREE OF US IN HERE.
IF I COULD SOMEHOW REACH THE LAD, THERE'D BE AT LEAST A HOPE OF BRINGING THOSE POWERS UNDER CONTROL. BUT MY EVERY ATTEMPT HAS FAILED-- HIS MIND'S A CLOSED BOOK, IN A LANGUAGE I DO NOT KNOW. DAVID'S CONDITION WORSENS BY THE DAY. CHARLEY'S THE STRONGEST TELEPATH ON THE PLANET. IF ANYONE CAN HELP, IT'S HE.
1984
IN OUR TIME, BOTH GABY AND I LOVED HIM. NOW, WE MUST HURT HIM TERRIBLY-- AND THEN ASK OF HIM ALL THAT HE CAN GIVE. AND HE WILL, TOO, BLESS HIS LION'S HEART-- FOR THE BOY. I ONLY HOPE HE WON'T HATE US TOO MUCH.


FROM THE JOURNALS OF CHARLES XAVIER:
LILA CHENEY
MUSICIAN. PERFORMER. IN THE VERNACULAR: A "*WORLD CLASS ROCK STAR.*" I MUST CONFESS, HER SINGING LEAVES ME AS COLD AND UNAFFECTED AS HER WARDROBE. YET THE NEW MUTANTS ADORE HER, ESPECIALLY SAM.
SHE IS ALSO A MUTANT--A TELEPORTER OF PHENOMENAL RANGE, ABLE TO SHIFT HERSELF ACROSS THE GALAXY AS EASILY AS NIGHTCRAWLER TELEPORTS ACROSS A ROOM. REGRETTABLY, SHE UTILIZES THIS EXTRAORDINARY GIFT FOR CRIMINAL GAIN. SHE IS A THIEF.
INDEED, HER LAST SUCH CAPER WAS AN ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE EARTH AND SELL IT--POPULACE INCLUDED--TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. A PITY THERE IS NO APPLICABLE LEGAL STATUTE OR JURISDICTION--EVEN IF SHE WERE DULY TRIED AND CONVICTED, WHAT PRISON COULD HOLD SUCH A BEING?
SHE IS HUMAN, AND I BELIEVE ENGLISH--HER BASIC ACCENT IS COCKNEY. BEYOND THAT, VIRTUALLY NOTHING IS KNOWN OF HER HISTORY. I DEBATED PROHIBITING MY STUDENTS FROM ASSOCIATING WITH HER, BUT HAVE DETERMINED THAT DECISION IS BEST LEFT TO THEM. FOR ALL HER WORLDLY WAYS, LILA IS STILL A YOUNG WOMAN--WHO KNOWS, ASSOCIATION WITH MY STUDENTS MAY DO HER GOOD.
I JUST WISH SHE WOULD STOP SENDING SAM "*CARE PACKAGES*" OF WHAT SHE FEELS ARE "*PROPER*" CLOTHES FOR HIM--OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, HE WOULD REFRAIN FROM WEARING THEM.
84.



*NEW MUTANTS CLASSIC VOL. 2 TPB*
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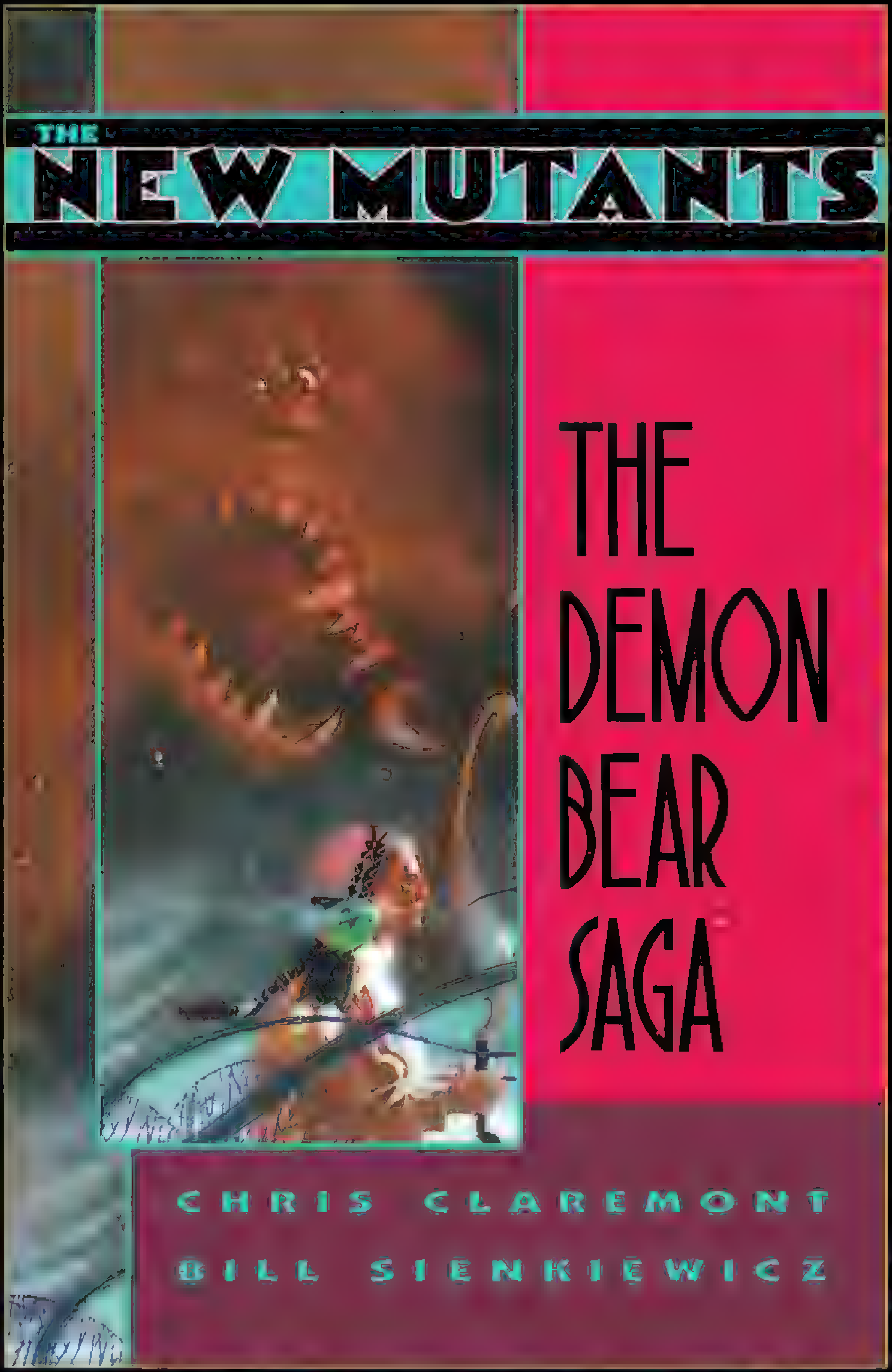
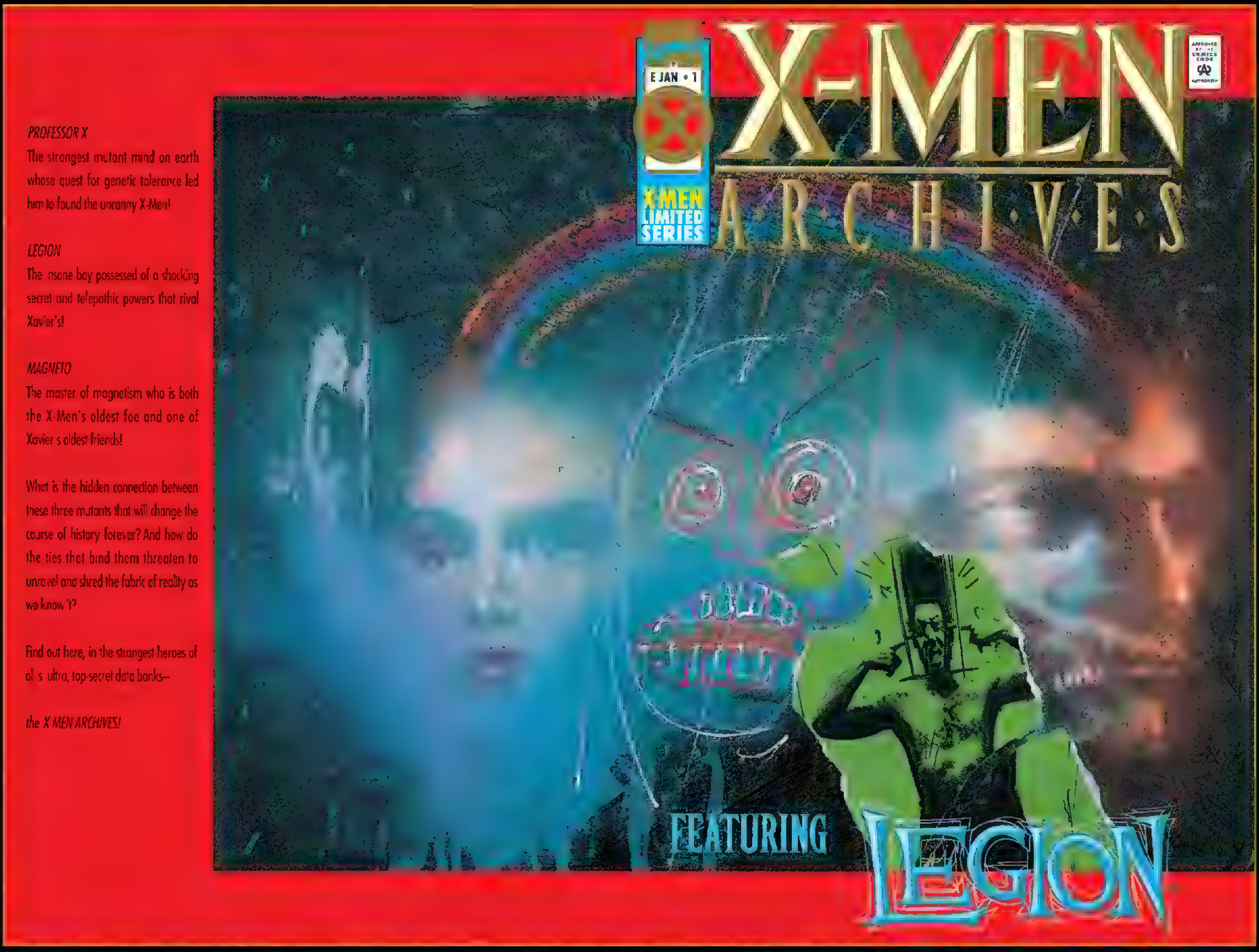

THE NEW MUTANTS
THE DEMON BEAR SAGA
CHRIS CLAREMONT
BILL SIENKIEWICZ

*NEW MUTANTS: THE DEMON BEAR SAGA TPB* (1991)
COVER ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ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X-MEN LIMITED SERIES
X-MEN
A·R·C·H·I·V·E·S
FEATURING
LEGION

*PROFESSOR X*
The strongest mutant mind on earth whose quest for genetic tolerance led him to found the uncanny X-Men!

*LEGION*
The insane boy possessed of a shocking secret and telepathic powers that rival Xavier's!

*MAGNETO*
The master of magnetism who is both the X-Men's oldest foe and one of Xavier's oldest friends!

What is the hidden connection between these three mutants that will change the course of history forever? And how do the ties that bind them threaten to unravel and shred the fabric of reality as we know it?

Find out here, in the strangest heroes of all's ultra, top-secret data banks—

*the X-MEN ARCHIVES!*

*X-MEN ARCHIVES #1* REPRINTED *NEW MUTANTS #26* WITH MODERN-STYLE COLORING. COVER ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

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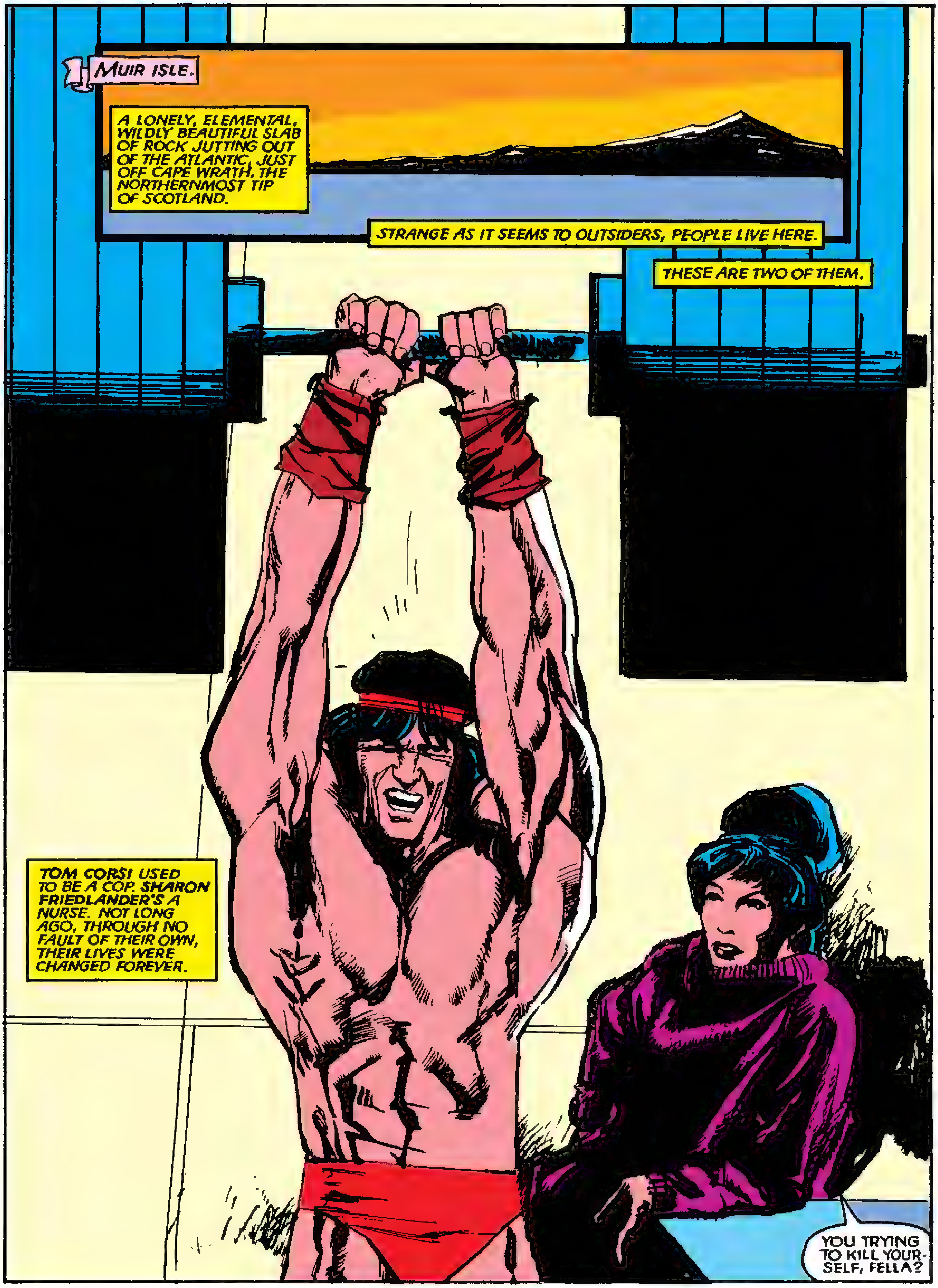
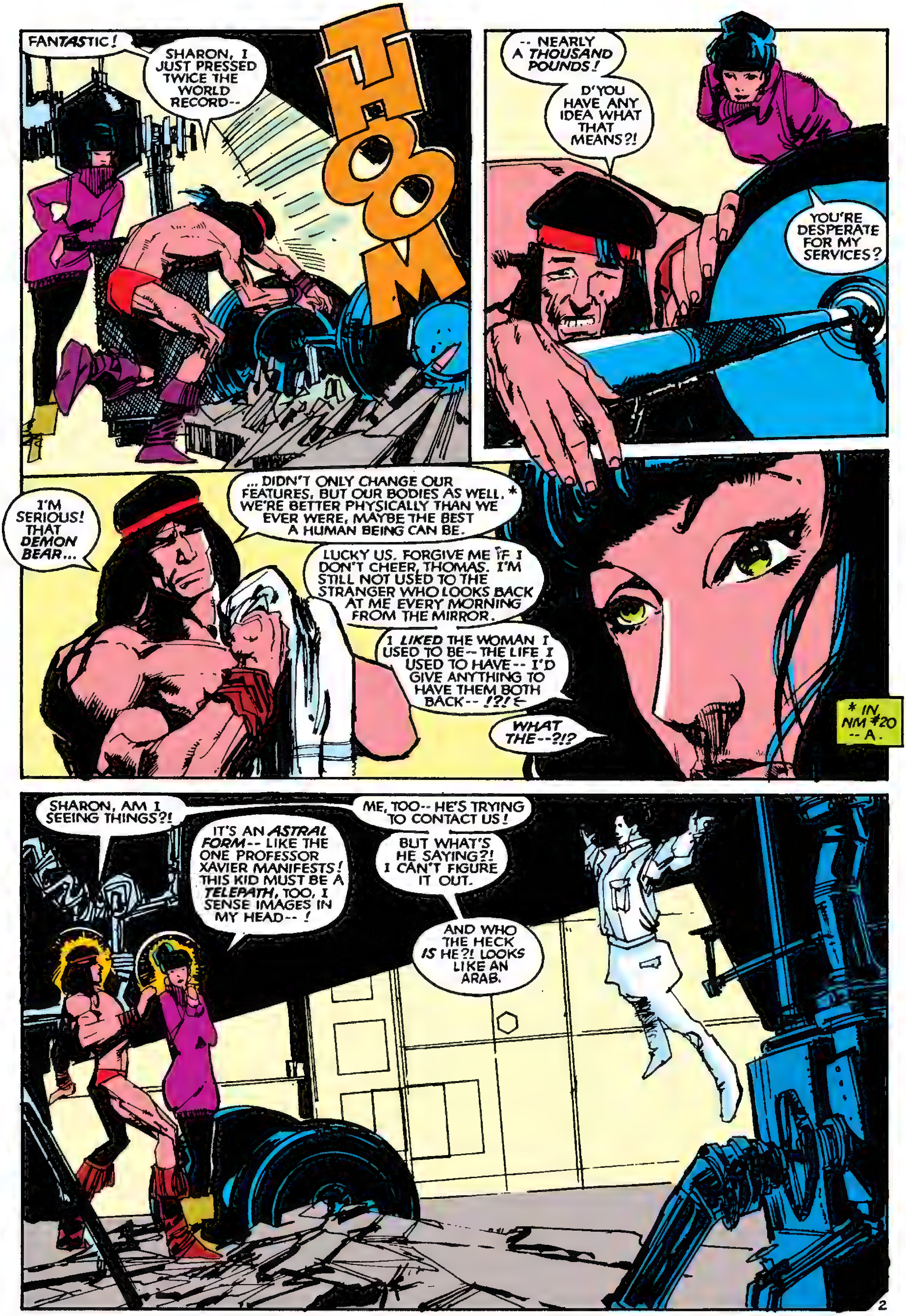
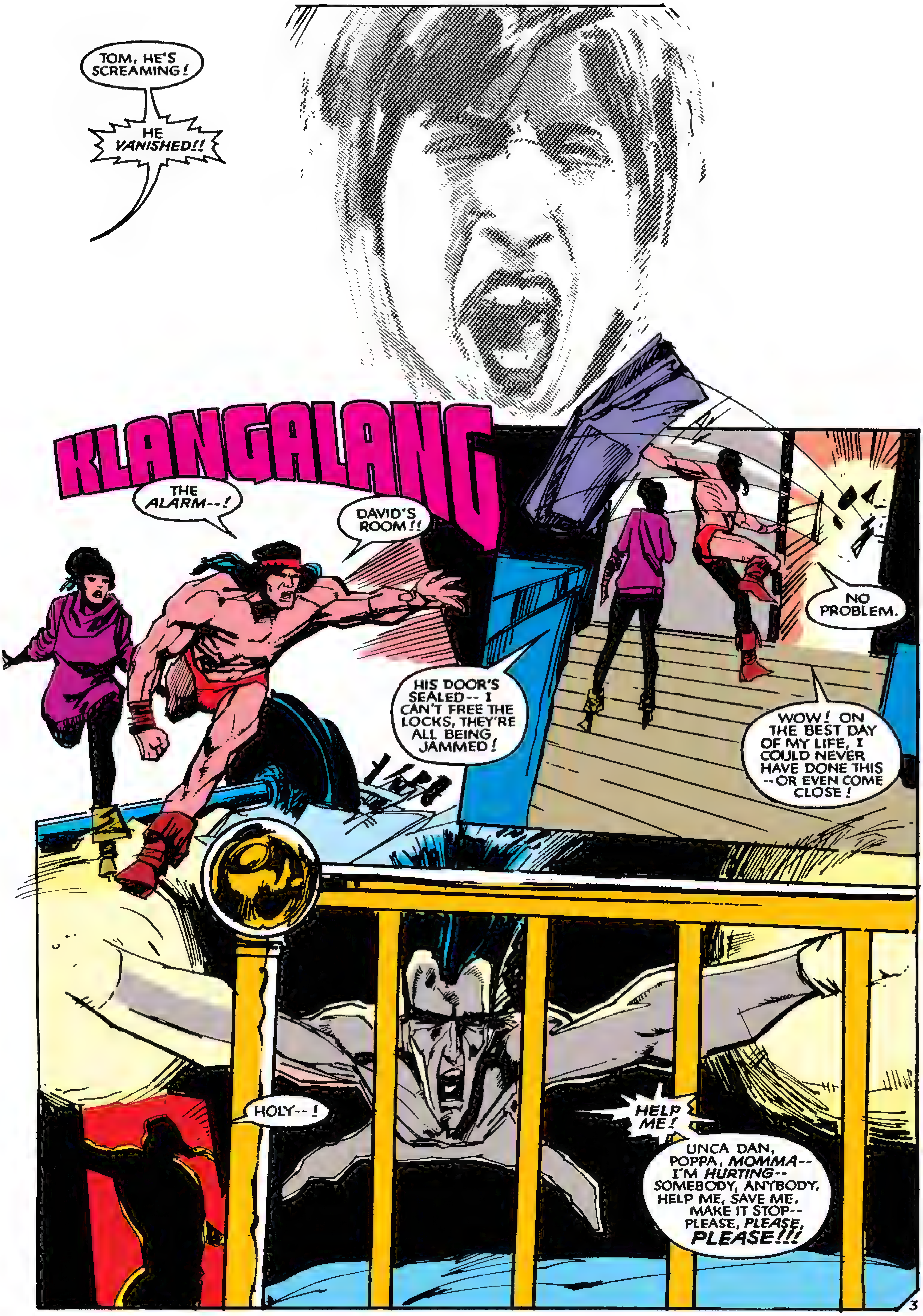
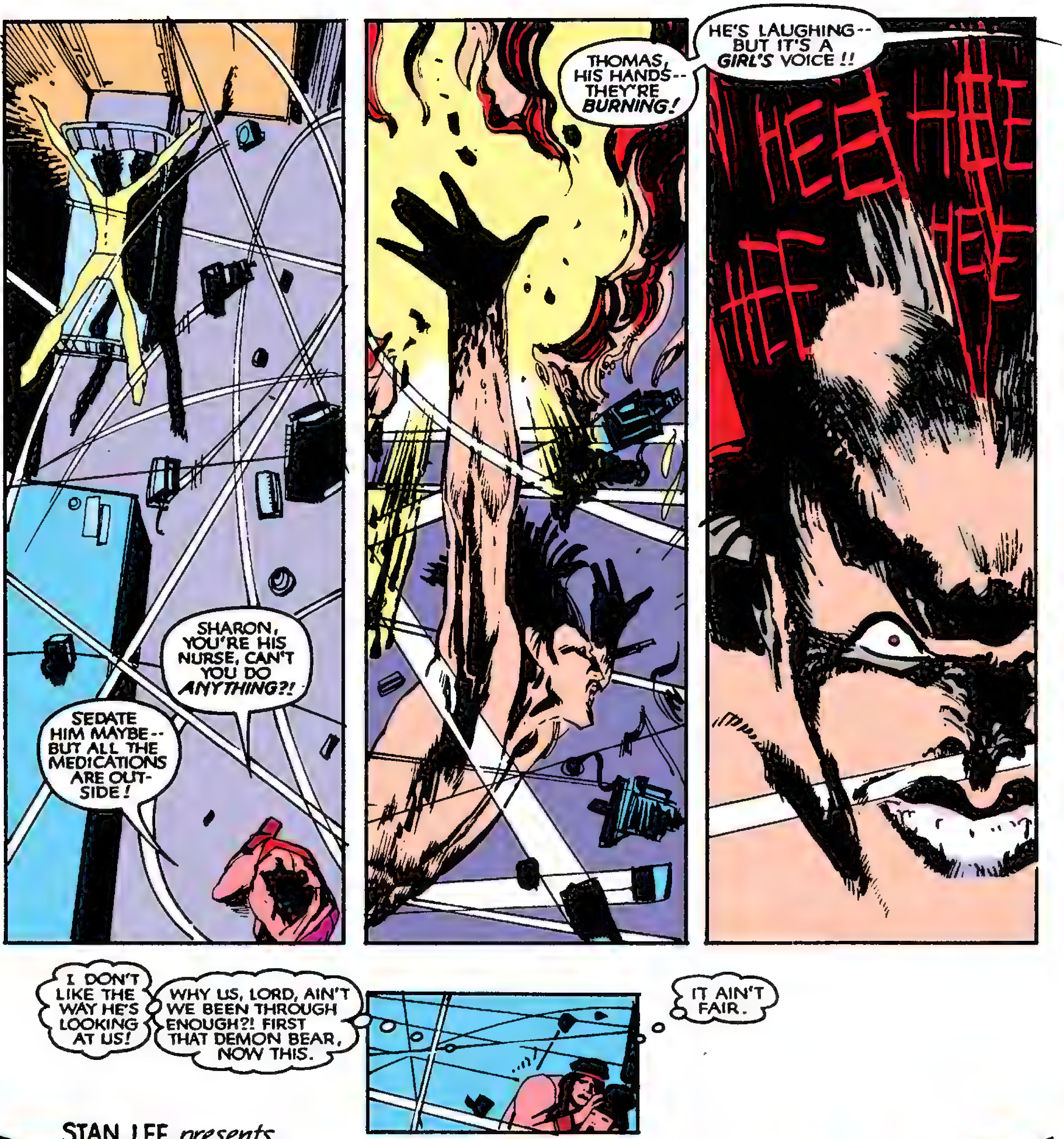
Bill Sienkiewicz 1984


MUIR ISLE.
A LONELY, ELEMENTAL, WILDLY BEAUTIFUL SLAB OF ROCK JUTTING OUT OF THE ATLANTIC, JUST OFF CAPE WRATH, THE NORTHERNMOST TIP OF SCOTLAND.
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS TO OUTSIDERS, PEOPLE LIVE HERE.
THESE ARE TWO OF THEM.
TOM CORSI USED TO BE A COP. SHARON FRIEDLANDER'S A NURSE. NOT LONG AGO, THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN, THEIR LIVES WERE CHANGED FOREVER.
YOU TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF, FELLA?


FANTASTIC!
SHARON, I JUST PRESSED TWICE THE WORLD RECORD--
THOOM
-- NEARLY A *THOUSAND POUNDS!*
D'YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THAT MEANS?!
YOU'RE DESPERATE FOR MY SERVICES?
I'M SERIOUS! THAT *DEMON BEAR*...
...DIDN'T ONLY CHANGE OUR FEATURES, BUT OUR BODIES AS WELL.* WE'RE BETTER PHYSICALLY THAN WE EVER WERE, MAYBE THE BEST A HUMAN BEING CAN BE.
LUCKY US. FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T CHEER, THOMAS. I'M STILL NOT USED TO THE STRANGER WHO LOOKS BACK AT ME EVERY MORNING FROM THE MIRROR.
I *LIKED* THE WOMAN I USED TO BE -- THE LIFE I USED TO HAVE -- I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO HAVE THEM BOTH BACK-- *!?!*
*WHAT THE--?!?*
*** IN NM #20 -- A.***
SHARON, AM I SEEING THINGS?!
ME, TOO -- HE'S TRYING TO CONTACT US!
IT'S AN *ASTRAL FORM* -- LIKE THE ONE PROFESSOR XAVIER MANIFESTS! THIS KID MUST BE A *TELEPATH*, TOO, I SENSE IMAGES IN MY HEAD -- !
BUT WHAT'S HE SAYING?! I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.
AND WHO THE HECK *IS* HE?! LOOKS LIKE AN ARAB.


TOM, HE'S SCREAMING!
HE VANISHED!!
KLANGALANG
THE ALARM--!
DAVID'S ROOM!!
HIS DOOR'S SEALED-- I CAN'T FREE THE LOCKS, THEY'RE ALL BEING JAMMED!
NO PROBLEM.
WOW! ON THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE, I COULD NEVER HAVE DONE THIS --OR EVEN COME CLOSE!
HOLY--!
HELP ME!
UNCA DAN, POPPA, MOMMA-- I'M HURTING-- SOMEBODY, ANYBODY, HELP ME, SAVE ME, MAKE IT STOP-- PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!!!

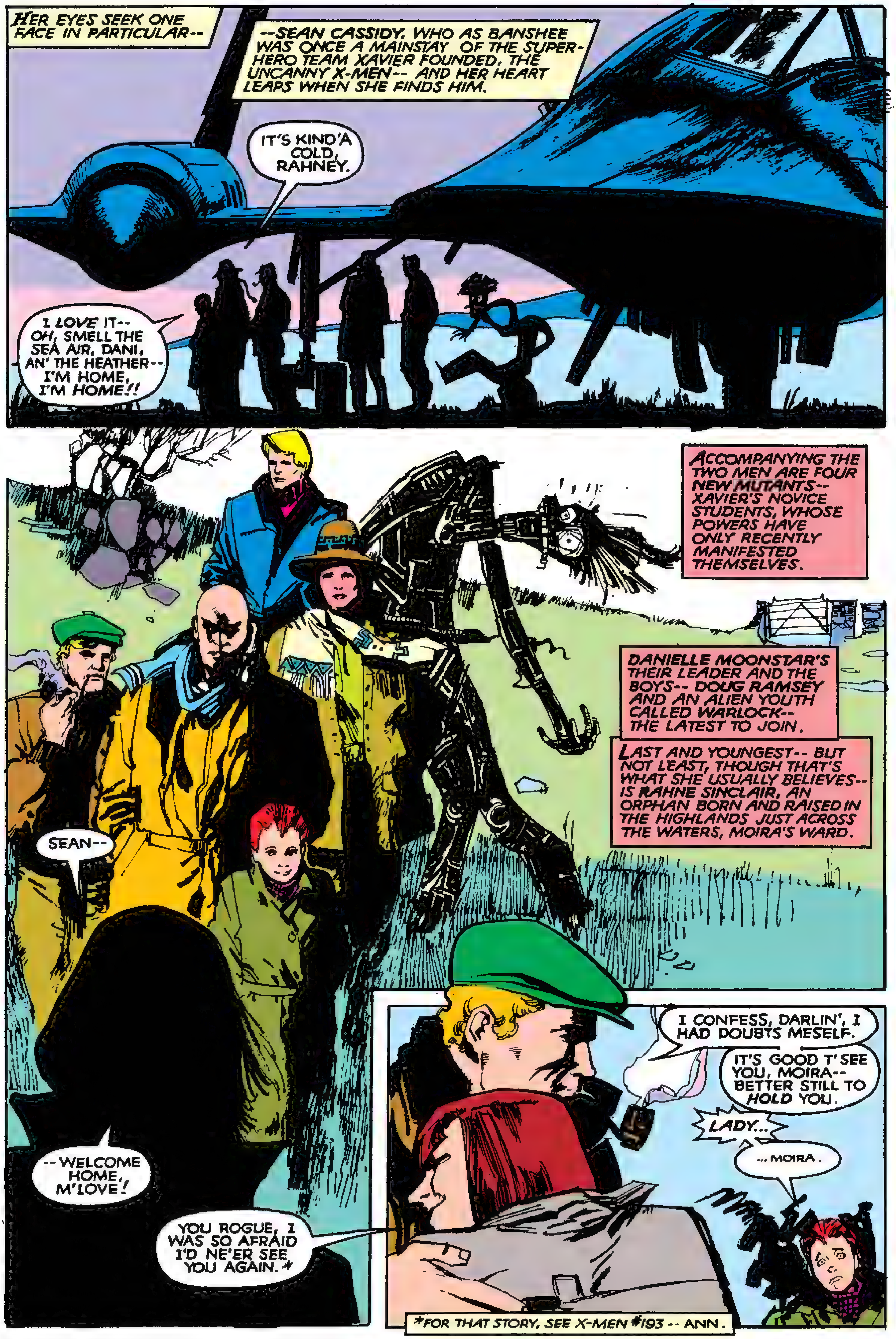
WHAT THE--?!
SHARON, THE ROOM'S COME ALIVE, EVERYTHING'S GOING CRAZY--
--HIT THE DECK!
KLASH!
HE MUST HAVE *TELEKINETIC* POWERS--*AIOW!*-- HE CAN MOVE OBJECTS WITHOUT PHYSICALLY TOUCHING THEM!
HE'S THROWING A POLTERGEIST TANTRUM!
WE GOTTA GET OUWWW!
THE KID WON'T LET US NEAR THE DOOR--
KAK
--HE'S FORCING US DEEPER INTO THE ROOM, CLOSER TO HIM!
TAK
SHOOT, I KNEW I SHOULD'A PAID MORE ATTENTION IN CATECHISM CLASS.
A GUY CAN NEVER THINK OF A DECENT PRAYER WHEN HE REALLY NEEDS ONE.
POOR KID'S SCREAMING LIKE A BANSHEE-- I DON'T THINK HE KNOWS WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM. THE POWER MAY BE HIS...
...BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST NOTION OF HOW TO CONTROL IT. HE'S AS MUCH A VICTIM AS WE ARE.
MOMMA SAVEME POPPA HELPME HURTING LONELY BURNING SCARED

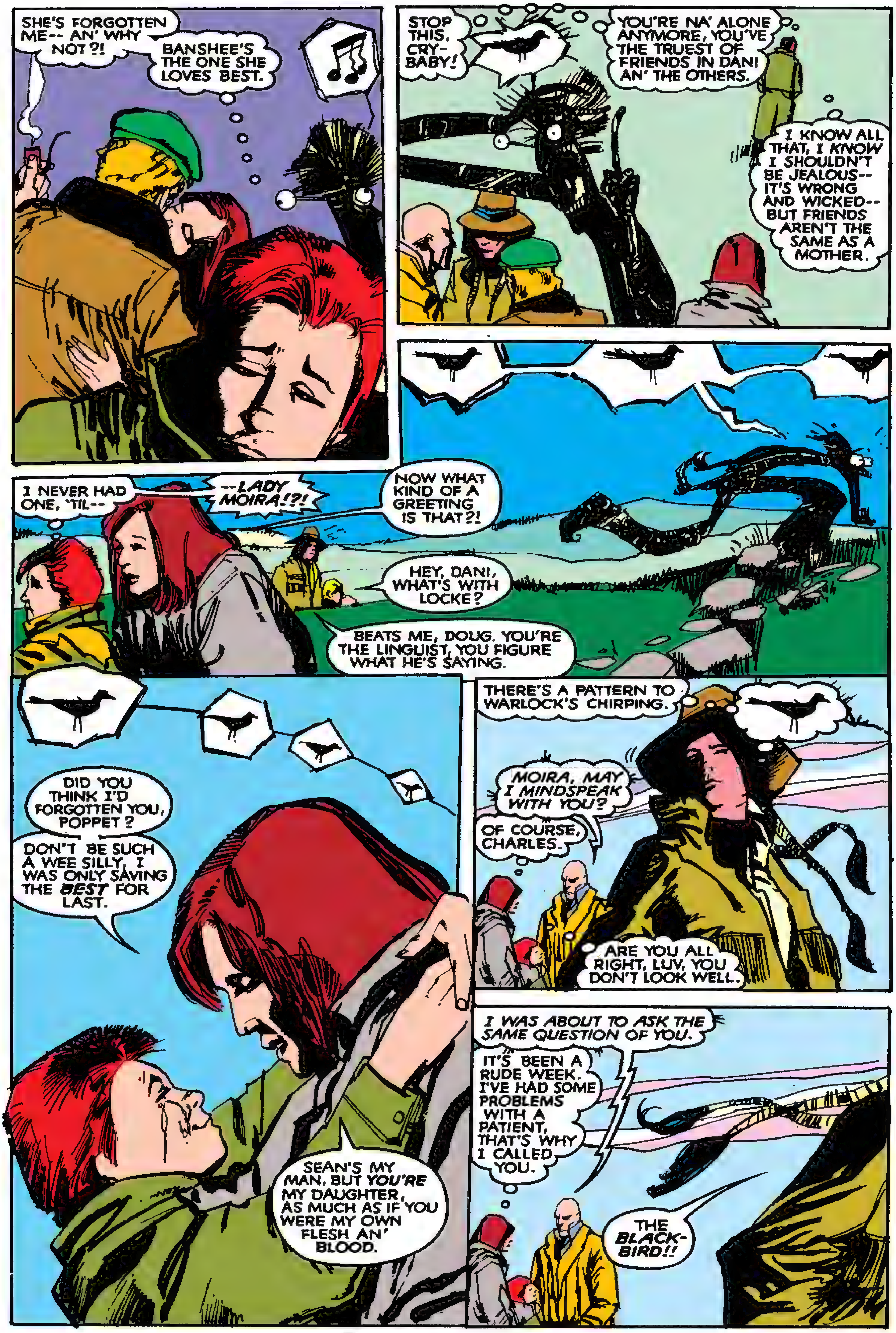

SHARON, YOU'RE HIS NURSE, CAN'T YOU DO *ANYTHING*?!
SEDATE HIM MAYBE-- BUT ALL THE MEDICATIONS ARE OUTSIDE!
THOMAS, HIS HANDS-- THEY'RE *BURNING!*
HE'S LAUGHING-- BUT IT'S A *GIRL'S* VOICE!!
HEE HEE HEE HEE
I DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE'S LOOKING AT US!
WHY US, LORD, AIN'T WE BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH?! FIRST THAT DEMON BEAR, NOW THIS.
IT AIN'T FAIR.

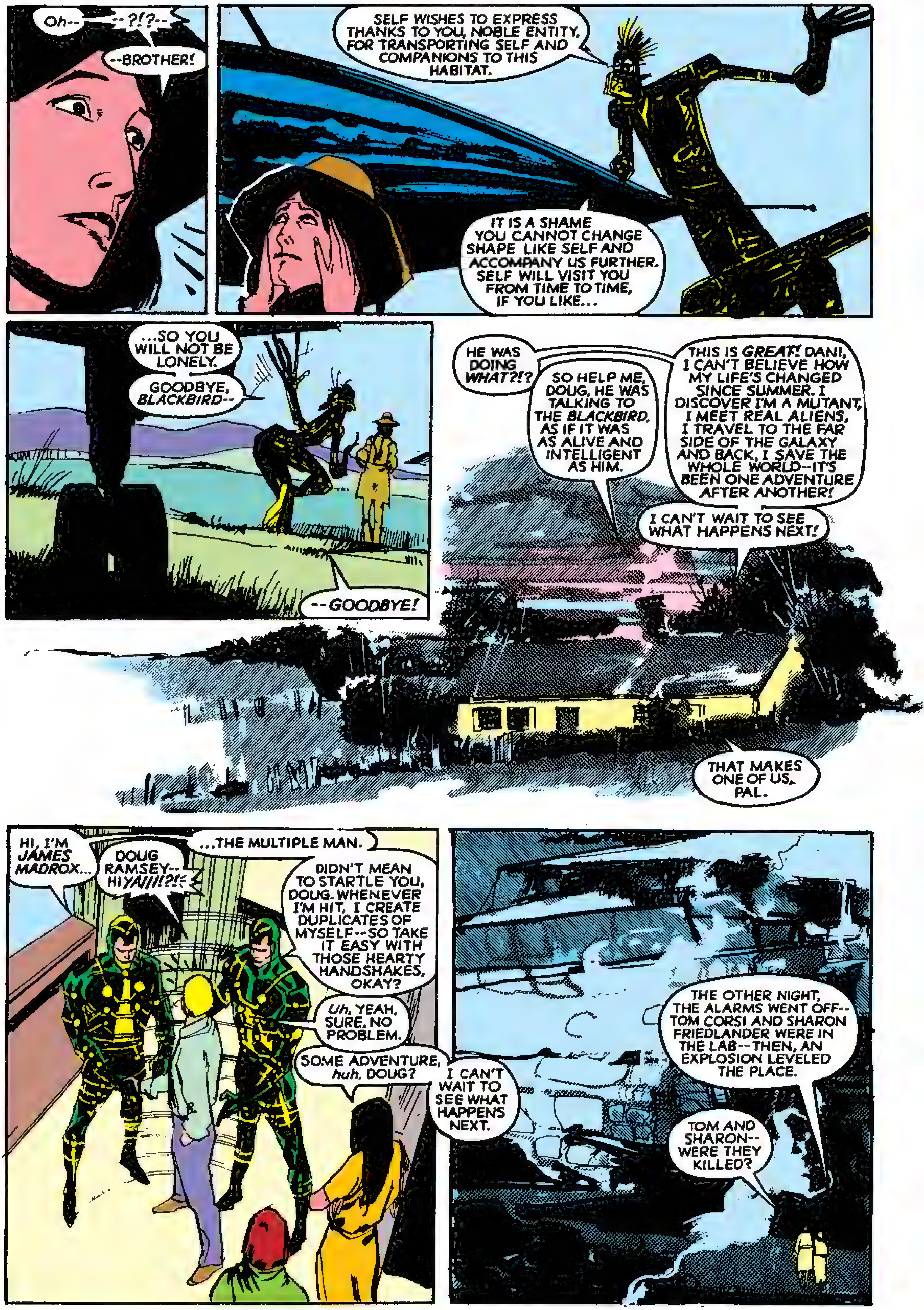
STAN LEE *presents...*

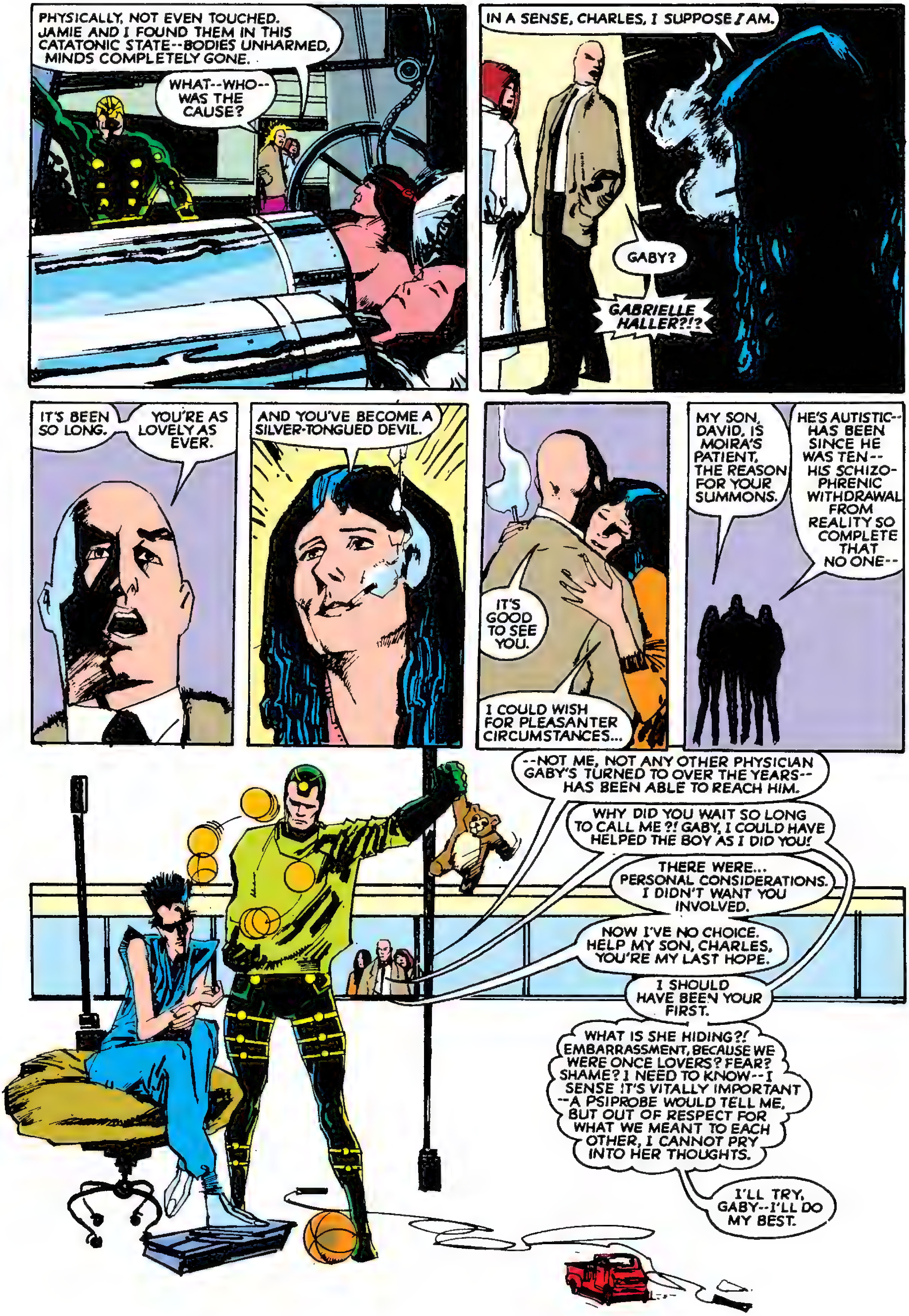
# LEGION

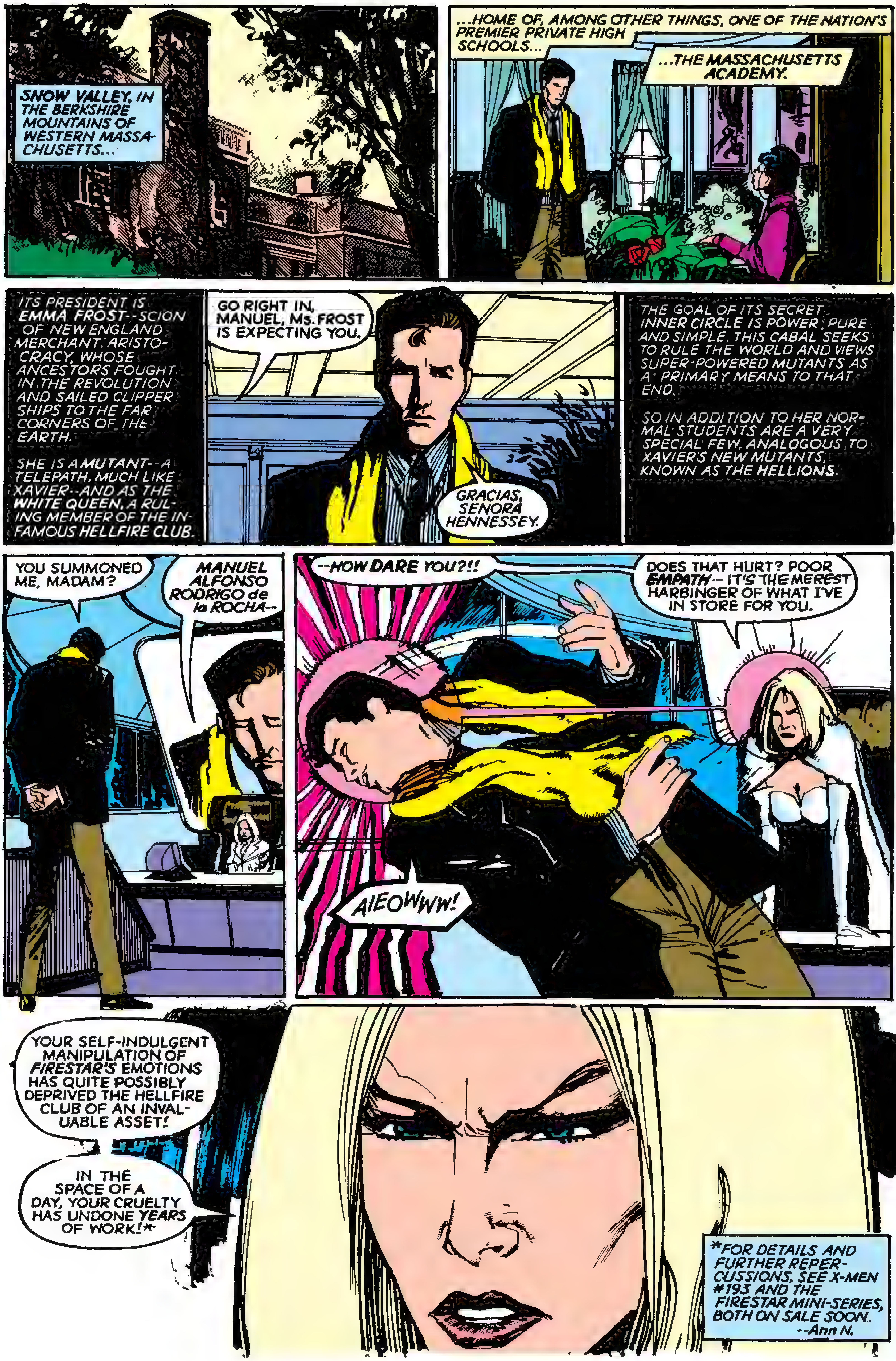
WTOOOOM
The morning of the following day...
...An ebony aircraft streaks out of the still-dark western sky to a landing on Muir Isle.
It's one of a kind, a custom-built version of America's SR-71 Blackbird ultra-high performance spyplane. It belongs to the man Moira MacTaggert once loved with all her heart-- and still cares for deeply.
Years ago, when she walked out of Charles Xavier's life without explanation, she broke his heart. She hurt him as badly as a person could.
A moment of triumph and tragedy in the lives of Professor Charles Xavier and his novice students, the New Mutants...
As chronicled by
Chris Claremont, writer
Bill Sienkiewicz, artist
Glynis Wein, colorist
Tom Orzechowski, letterer
Ann Nocenti, editor
Jim Shooter, editor-in-chief
Today, she fears she will do worse.

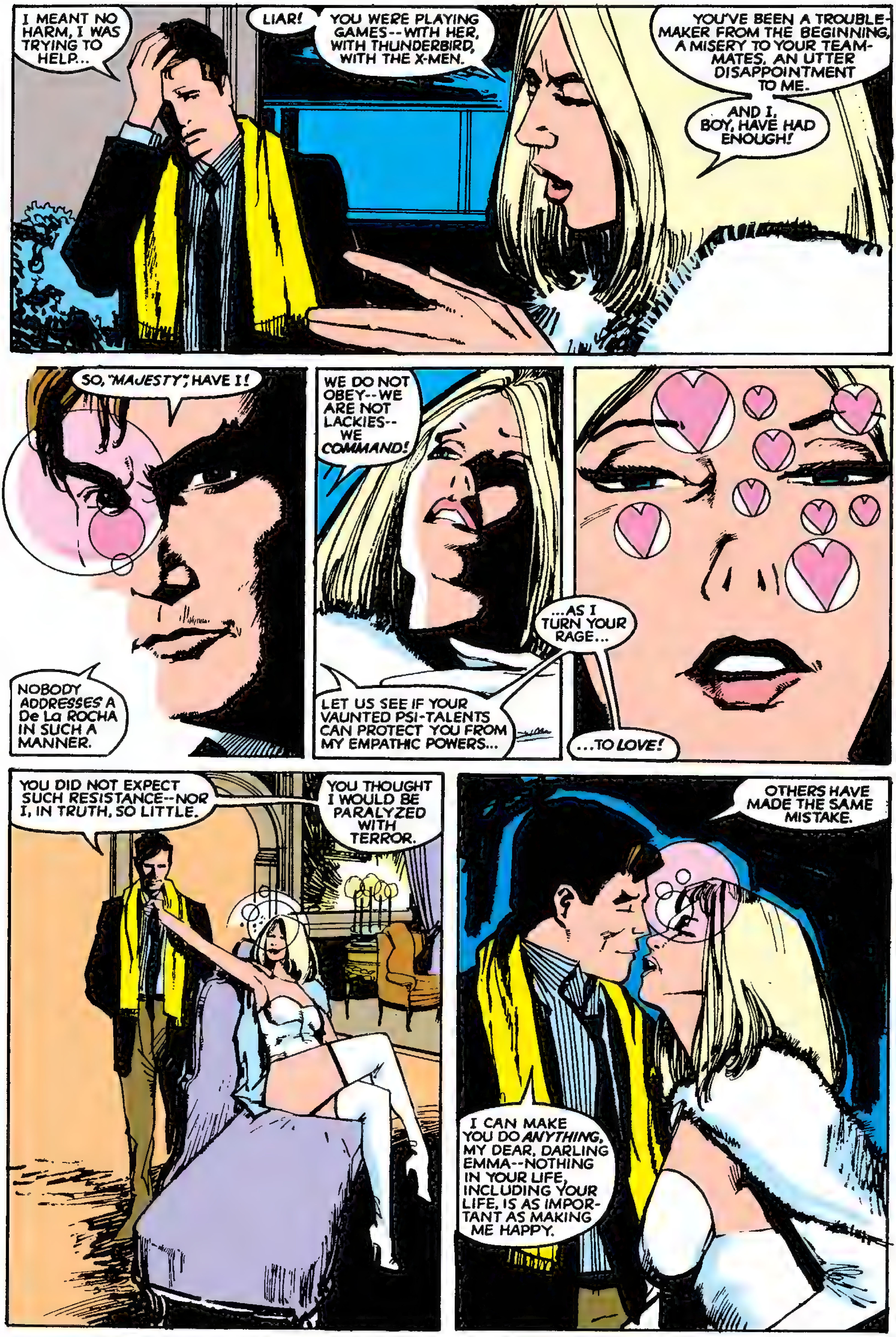

HER EYES SEEK ONE FACE IN PARTICULAR--
--SEAN CASSIDY, WHO AS BANSHEE WAS ONCE A MAINSTAY OF THE SUPER-HERO TEAM XAVIER FOUNDED, THE UNCANNY X-MEN-- AND HER HEART LEAPS WHEN SHE FINDS HIM.
IT'S KIND'A COLD, RAHNEY.
I *LOVE* IT-- OH, SMELL THE SEA AIR, DANI, AN' THE HEATHER-- I'M HOME, I'M *HOME*!!
ACCOMPANYING THE TWO MEN ARE FOUR NEW MUTANTS-- XAVIER'S NOVICE STUDENTS, WHOSE POWERS HAVE ONLY RECENTLY MANIFESTED THEMSELVES.
DANIELLE MOONSTAR'S THEIR LEADER AND THE BOYS-- DOUG RAMSEY AND AN ALIEN YOUTH CALLED WARLOCK-- THE LATEST TO JOIN.
LAST AND YOUNGEST-- BUT NOT LEAST, THOUGH THAT'S WHAT SHE USUALLY BELIEVES-- IS RAHNE SINCLAIR, AN ORPHAN BORN AND RAISED IN THE HIGHLANDS JUST ACROSS THE WATERS, MOIRA'S WARD.
SEAN--
--WELCOME HOME, M'LOVE!
YOU ROGUE, I WAS SO AFRAID I'D NE'ER SEE YOU AGAIN.*
I CONFESS, DARLIN', I HAD DOUBTS MESELF.
IT'S GOOD T' SEE YOU, MOIRA-- BETTER STILL TO *HOLD* YOU.
*LADY*...
...MOIRA.
*FOR THAT STORY, SEE X-MEN #193 -- ANN.

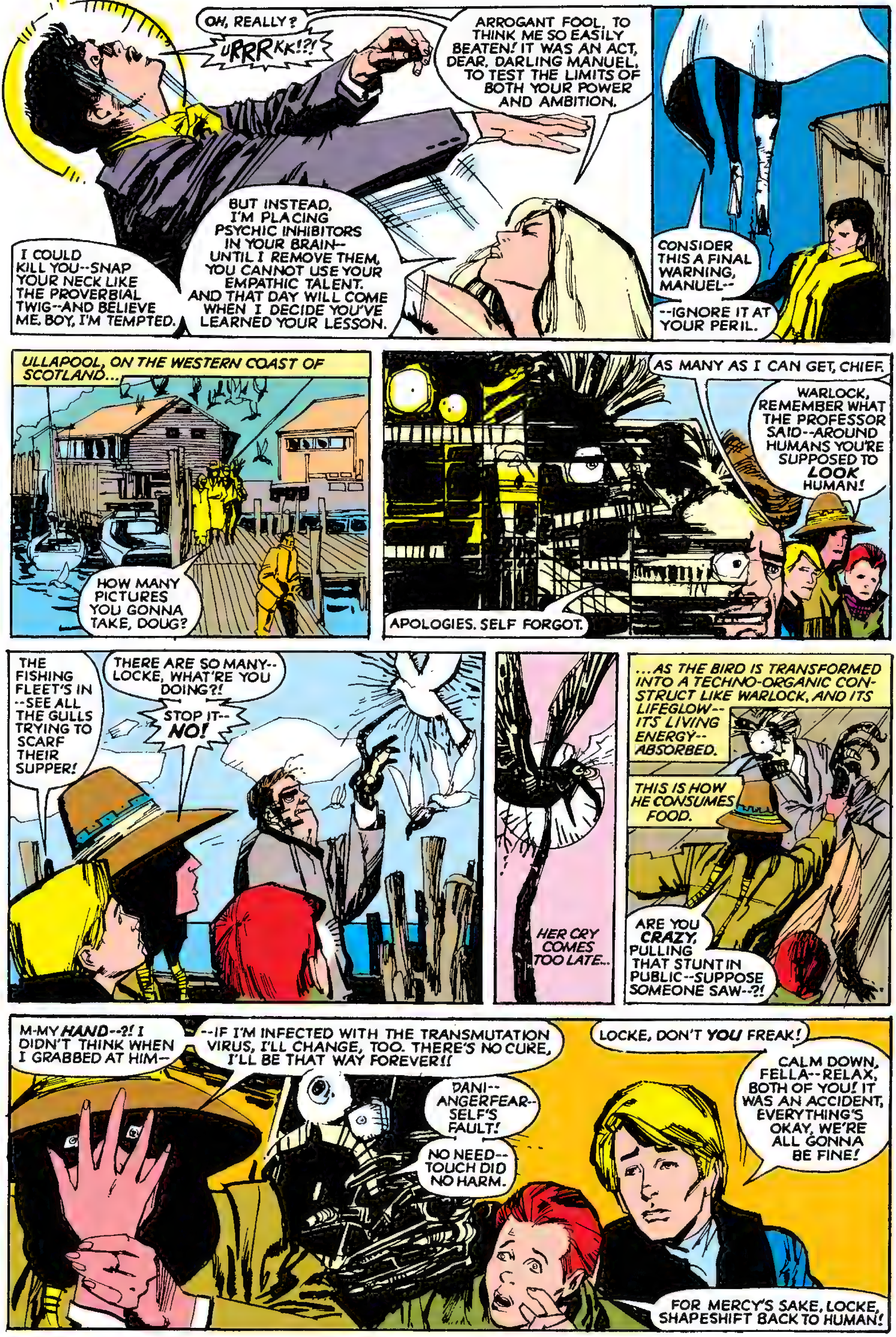

SHE'S FORGOTTEN ME-- AN' WHY NOT?!
BANSHEE'S THE ONE SHE LOVES BEST.
STOP THIS, CRY-BABY!
YOU'RE NA' ALONE ANYMORE, YOU'VE THE TRUEST OF FRIENDS IN DANI AN' THE OTHERS.
I KNOW ALL THAT, I *KNOW* I SHOULDN'T BE JEALOUS-- IT'S WRONG AND WICKED-- BUT FRIENDS AREN'T THE SAME AS A MOTHER.
I NEVER HAD ONE, 'TIL--
*--LADY MOIRA!?!*
NOW WHAT KIND OF A GREETING IS THAT?!
HEY, DANI, WHAT'S WITH LOCKE?
BEATS ME, DOUG. YOU'RE THE LINGUIST, YOU FIGURE WHAT HE'S SAYING.
DID YOU THINK I'D FORGOTTEN YOU, POPPET?
DON'T BE SUCH A WEE SILLY, I WAS ONLY SAVING THE *BEST* FOR LAST.
SEAN'S MY MAN, BUT *YOU'RE* MY DAUGHTER, AS MUCH AS IF YOU WERE MY OWN FLESH AN' BLOOD.
THERE'S A PATTERN TO WARLOCK'S CHIRPING.
*MOIRA, MAY I MINDSPEAK WITH YOU?*
OF COURSE, CHARLES.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, LUV, YOU DON'T LOOK WELL.
*I WAS ABOUT TO ASK THE SAME QUESTION OF YOU.*
IT'S BEEN A RUDE WEEK. I'VE HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH A PATIENT, THAT'S WHY I CALLED YOU.
THE *BLACKBIRD!!*

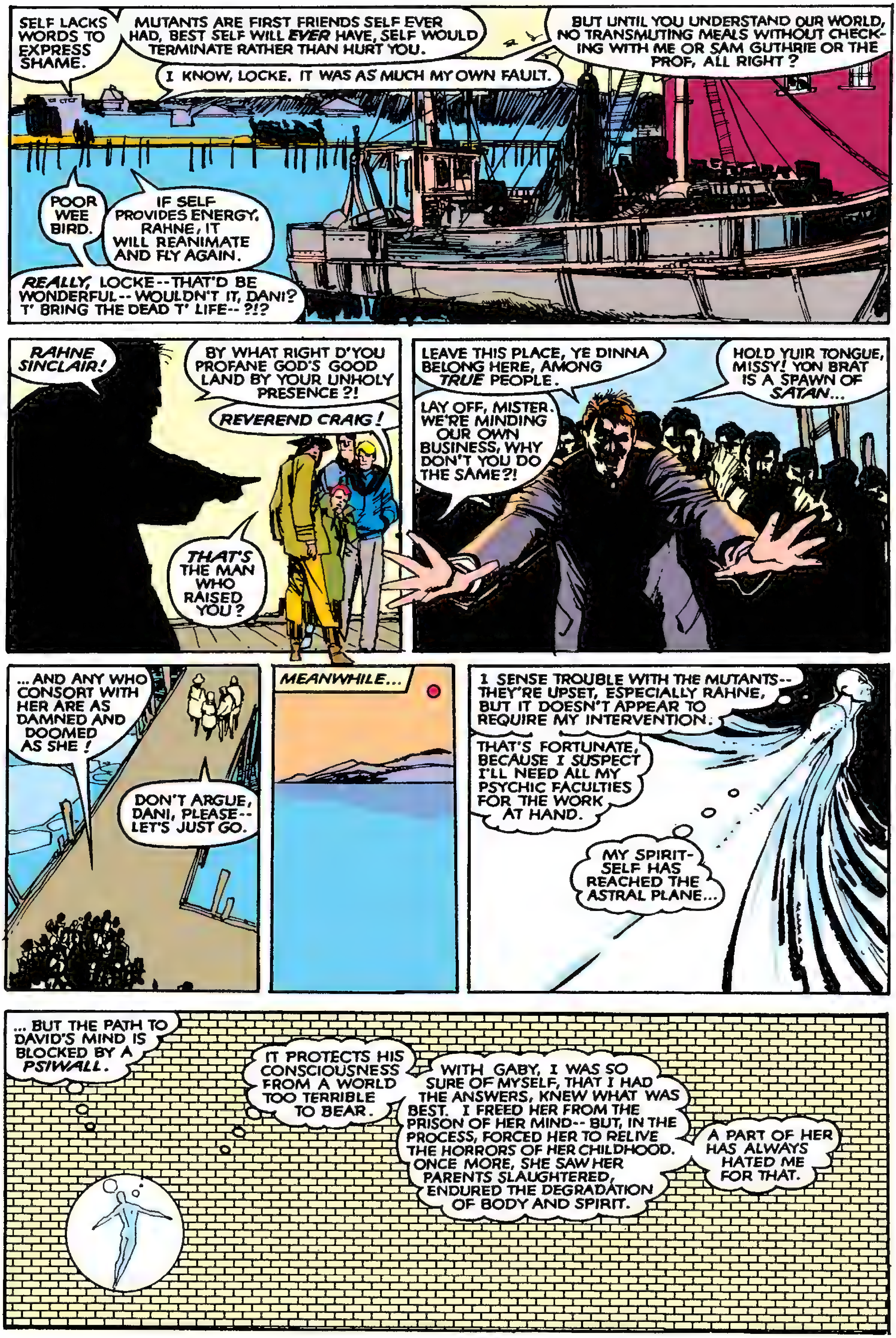

Oh--
--?!?--
--BROTHER!
SELF WISHES TO EXPRESS THANKS TO YOU, NOBLE ENTITY, FOR TRANSPORTING SELF AND COMPANIONS TO THIS HABITAT.
IT IS A SHAME YOU CANNOT CHANGE SHAPE LIKE SELF AND ACCOMPANY US FURTHER. SELF WILL VISIT YOU FROM TIME TO TIME, IF YOU LIKE...
...SO YOU WILL NOT BE LONELY.
GOODBYE, BLACKBIRD--
--GOODBYE!
HE WAS DOING WHAT?!?
SO HELP ME, DOUG, HE WAS TALKING TO THE BLACKBIRD, AS IF IT WAS AS ALIVE AND INTELLIGENT AS HIM.
THIS IS GREAT! DANI, I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MY LIFE'S CHANGED SINCE SUMMER. I DISCOVER I'M A MUTANT, I MEET REAL ALIENS, I TRAVEL TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE GALAXY AND BACK, I SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD--IT'S BEEN ONE ADVENTURE AFTER ANOTHER!
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!
THAT MAKES ONE OF US, PAL.
HI, I'M JAMES MADROX...
DOUG RAMSEY-- HIYAIII!?!
...THE MULTIPLE MAN.
DIDN'T MEAN TO STARTLE YOU, DOUG. WHENEVER I'M HIT, I CREATE DUPLICATES OF MYSELF--SO TAKE IT EASY WITH THOSE HEARTY HANDSHAKES, OKAY?
Uh, YEAH, SURE, NO PROBLEM.
SOME ADVENTURE, huh, DOUG?
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
THE OTHER NIGHT, THE ALARMS WENT OFF-- TOM CORSI AND SHARON FRIEDLANDER WERE IN THE LAB--THEN, AN EXPLOSION LEVELED THE PLACE.
TOM AND SHARON-- WERE THEY KILLED?

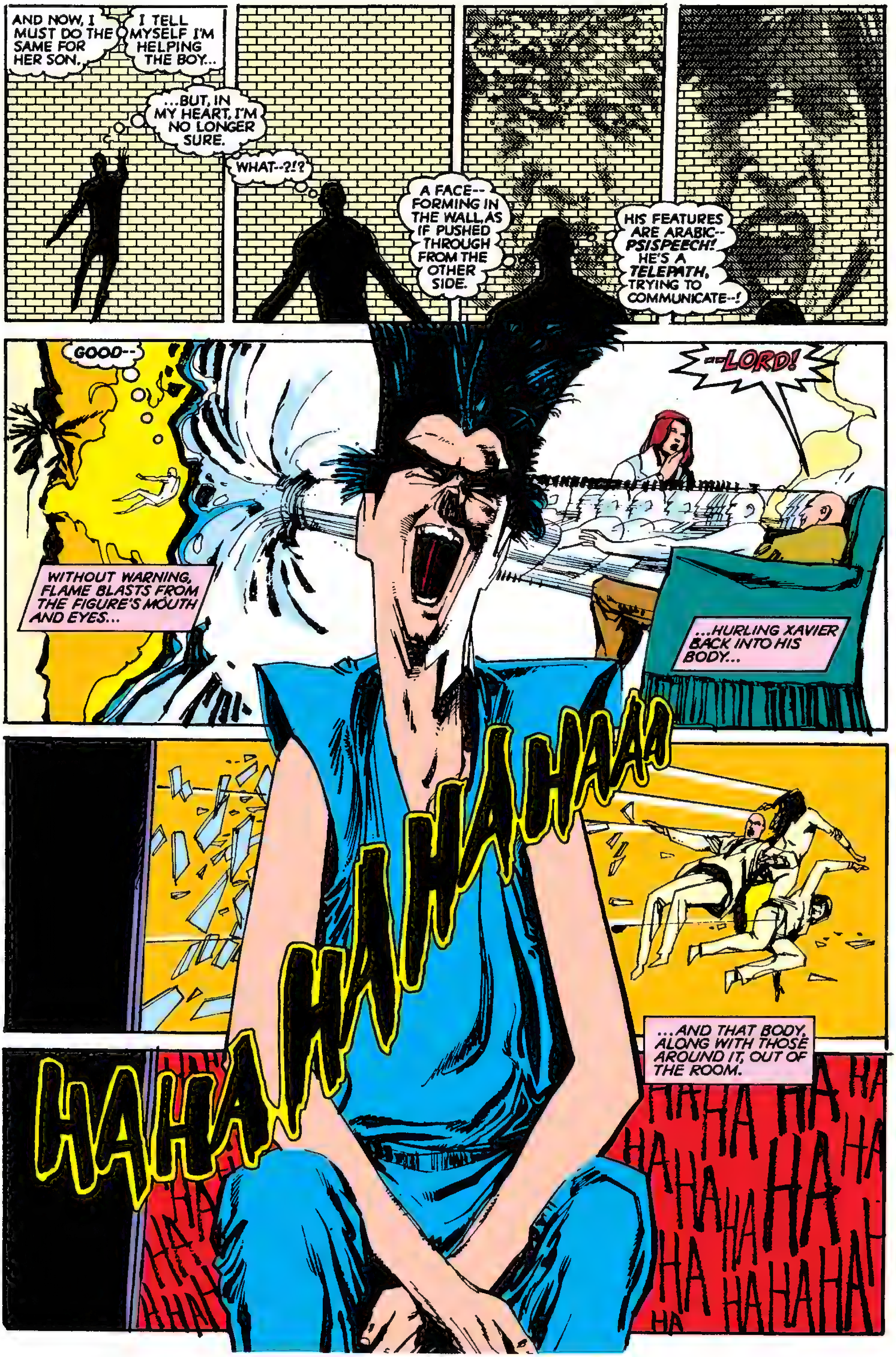

PHYSICALLY, NOT EVEN TOUCHED. JAMIE AND I FOUND THEM IN THIS CATATONIC STATE--BODIES UNHARMED, MINDS COMPLETELY GONE.
WHAT--WHO--WAS THE CAUSE?
IN A SENSE, CHARLES, I SUPPOSE *I* AM.
GABY?
GABRIELLE HALLER?!?
IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
YOU'RE AS LOVELY AS EVER.
AND YOU'VE BECOME A SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.
I COULD WISH FOR PLEASANTER CIRCUMSTANCES...
MY SON, DAVID, IS MOIRA'S PATIENT, THE REASON FOR YOUR SUMMONS.
HE'S AUTISTIC--HAS BEEN SINCE HE WAS TEN--HIS SCHIZOPHRENIC WITHDRAWAL FROM REALITY SO COMPLETE THAT NO ONE--
--NOT ME, NOT ANY OTHER PHYSICIAN GABY'S TURNED TO OVER THE YEARS--HAS BEEN ABLE TO REACH HIM.
WHY DID YOU WAIT SO LONG TO CALL ME?! GABY, I COULD HAVE HELPED THE BOY AS I DID YOU!
THERE WERE... PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS. I DIDN'T WANT YOU INVOLVED.
NOW I'VE NO CHOICE. HELP MY SON, CHARLES. YOU'RE MY LAST HOPE.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOUR FIRST.
WHAT IS SHE HIDING?! EMBARRASSMENT, BECAUSE WE WERE ONCE LOVERS? FEAR? SHAME? I NEED TO KNOW--I SENSE IT'S VITALLY IMPORTANT--A PSIPROBE WOULD TELL ME, BUT OUT OF RESPECT FOR WHAT WE MEANT TO EACH OTHER, I CANNOT PRY INTO HER THOUGHTS.
I'LL TRY, GABY--I'LL DO MY BEST.

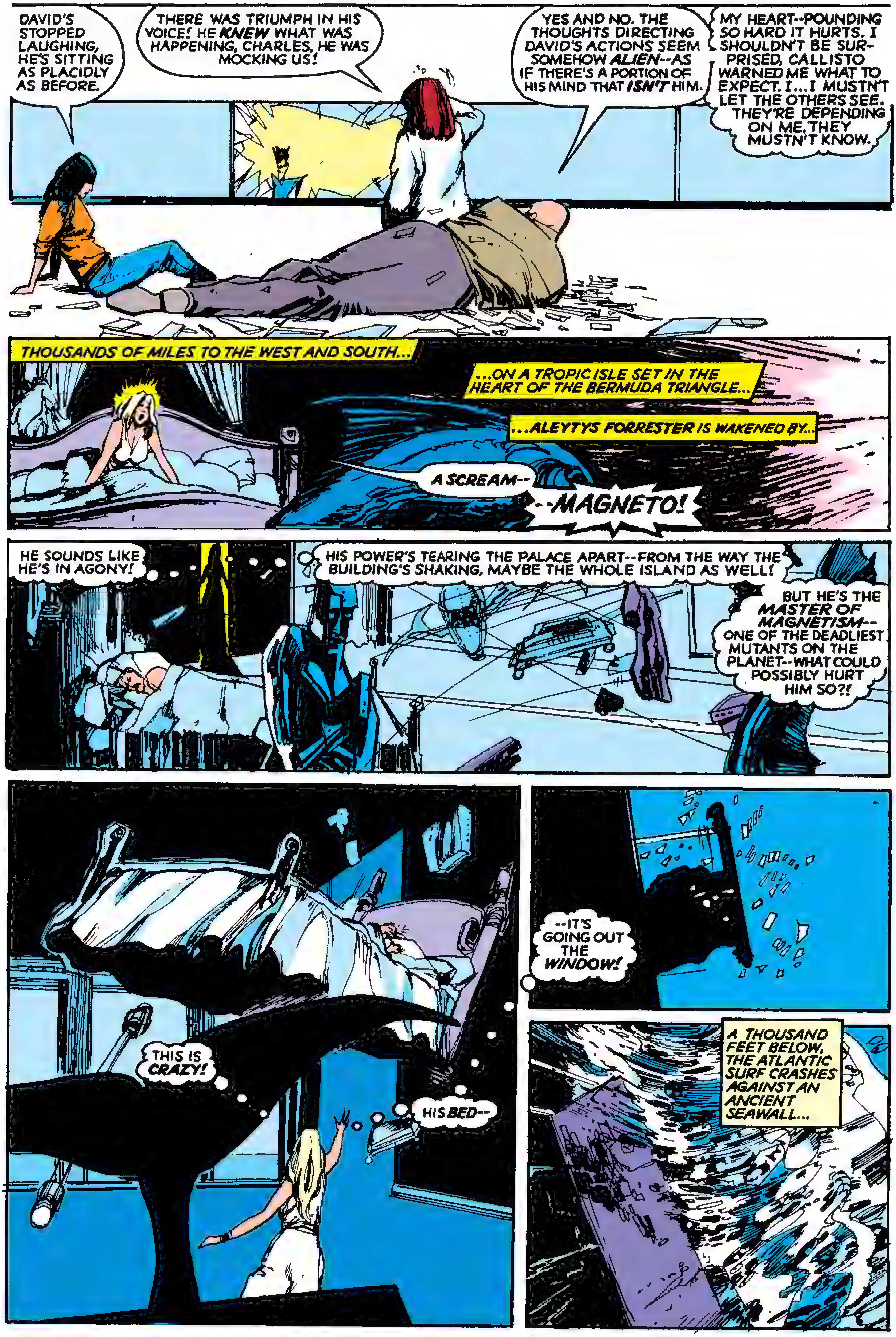

SNOW VALLEY, IN THE BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS...
...HOME OF, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ONE OF THE NATION'S PREMIER PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS...
...THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY.
ITS PRESIDENT IS EMMA FROST--SCION OF NEW ENGLAND MERCHANT ARISTOCRACY, WHOSE ANCESTORS FOUGHT IN THE REVOLUTION AND SAILED CLIPPER SHIPS TO THE FAR CORNERS OF THE EARTH.
SHE IS A MUTANT--A TELEPATH, MUCH LIKE XAVIER--AND AS THE WHITE QUEEN, A RULING MEMBER OF THE INFAMOUS HELLFIRE CLUB.
GO RIGHT IN, MANUEL, Ms. FROST IS EXPECTING YOU.
GRACIAS, SENORA HENNESSEY.
THE GOAL OF ITS SECRET INNER CIRCLE IS POWER, PURE AND SIMPLE. THIS CABAL SEEKS TO RULE THE WORLD AND VIEWS SUPER-POWERED MUTANTS AS A PRIMARY MEANS TO THAT END.
SO IN ADDITION TO HER NORMAL STUDENTS ARE A VERY SPECIAL FEW, ANALOGOUS TO XAVIER'S NEW MUTANTS, KNOWN AS THE HELLIONS.
YOU SUMMONED ME, MADAM?
MANUEL ALFONSO RODRIGO de la ROCHA--
--HOW DARE YOU?!!
DOES THAT HURT? POOR EMPATH--IT'S THE MEREST HARBINGER OF WHAT I'VE IN STORE FOR YOU.
AIEOWWW!
YOUR SELF-INDULGENT MANIPULATION OF FIRESTAR'S EMOTIONS HAS QUITE POSSIBLY DEPRIVED THE HELLFIRE CLUB OF AN INVALUABLE ASSET!
IN THE SPACE OF A DAY, YOUR CRUELTY HAS UNDONE YEARS OF WORK!*
*FOR DETAILS AND FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS, SEE X-MEN #193 AND THE FIRESTAR MINI-SERIES, BOTH ON SALE SOON. --Ann N.

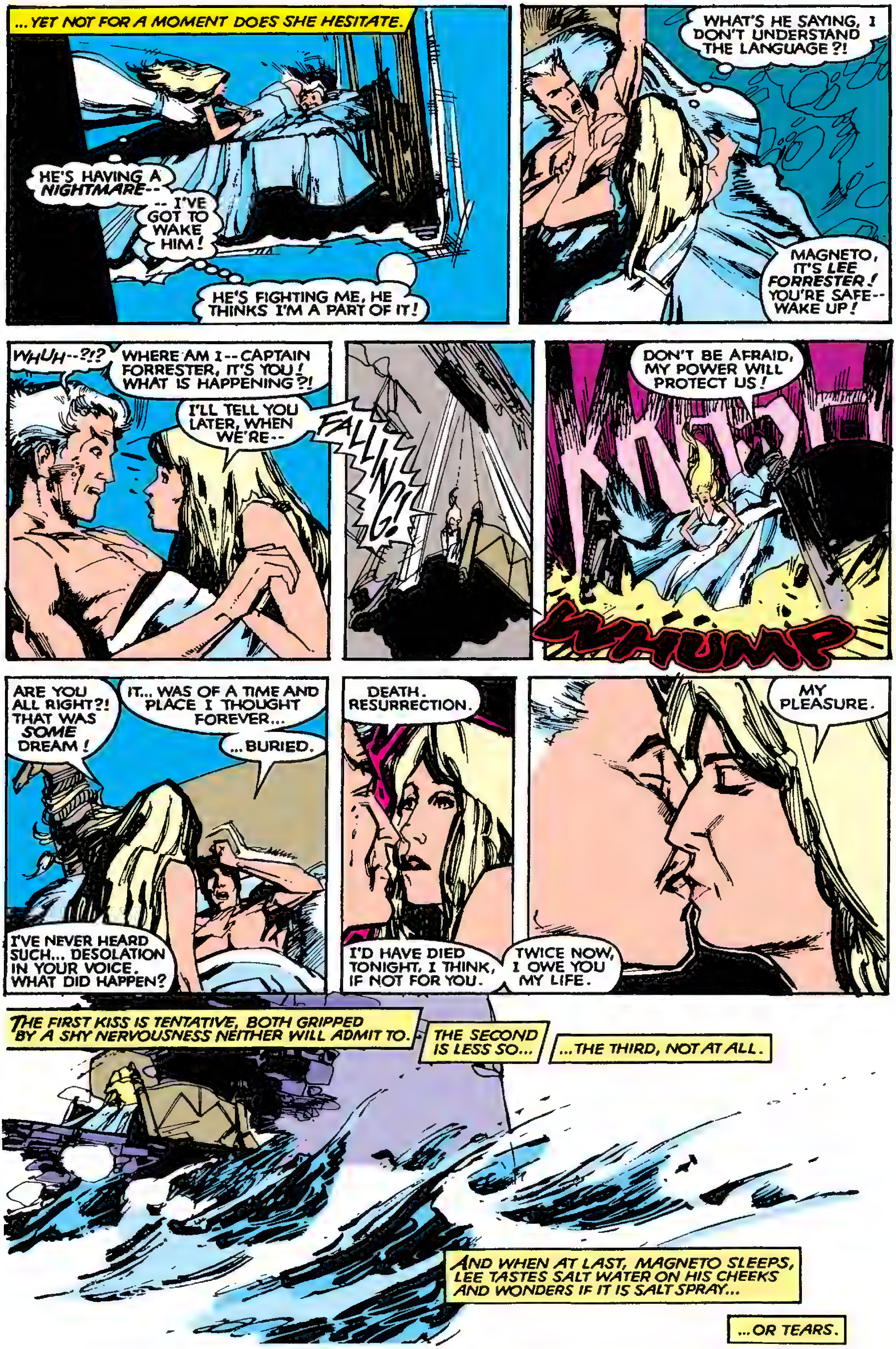

I MEANT NO HARM, I WAS TRYING TO HELP...
LIAR!
YOU WERE PLAYING GAMES--WITH HER, WITH THUNDERBIRD, WITH THE X-MEN.
YOU'VE BEEN A TROUBLEMAKER FROM THE BEGINNING, A MISERY TO YOUR TEAMMATES, AN UTTER DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME.
AND I, BOY, HAVE HAD ENOUGH!
SO, "*MAJESTY*", HAVE I!
NOBODY ADDRESSES A De La ROCHA IN SUCH A MANNER.
WE DO NOT OBEY--WE ARE NOT LACKIES--WE *COMMAND!*
LET US SEE IF YOUR VAUNTED PSI-TALENTS CAN PROTECT YOU FROM MY EMPATHIC POWERS...
...AS I TURN YOUR RAGE...
...TO *LOVE!*
YOU DID NOT EXPECT SUCH RESISTANCE--NOR I, IN TRUTH, SO LITTLE.
YOU THOUGHT I WOULD BE PARALYZED WITH TERROR.
OTHERS HAVE MADE THE SAME MISTAKE.
I CAN MAKE YOU DO *ANYTHING*, MY DEAR, DARLING EMMA--NOTHING IN YOUR LIFE, INCLUDING YOUR LIFE, IS AS IMPORTANT AS MAKING ME HAPPY.

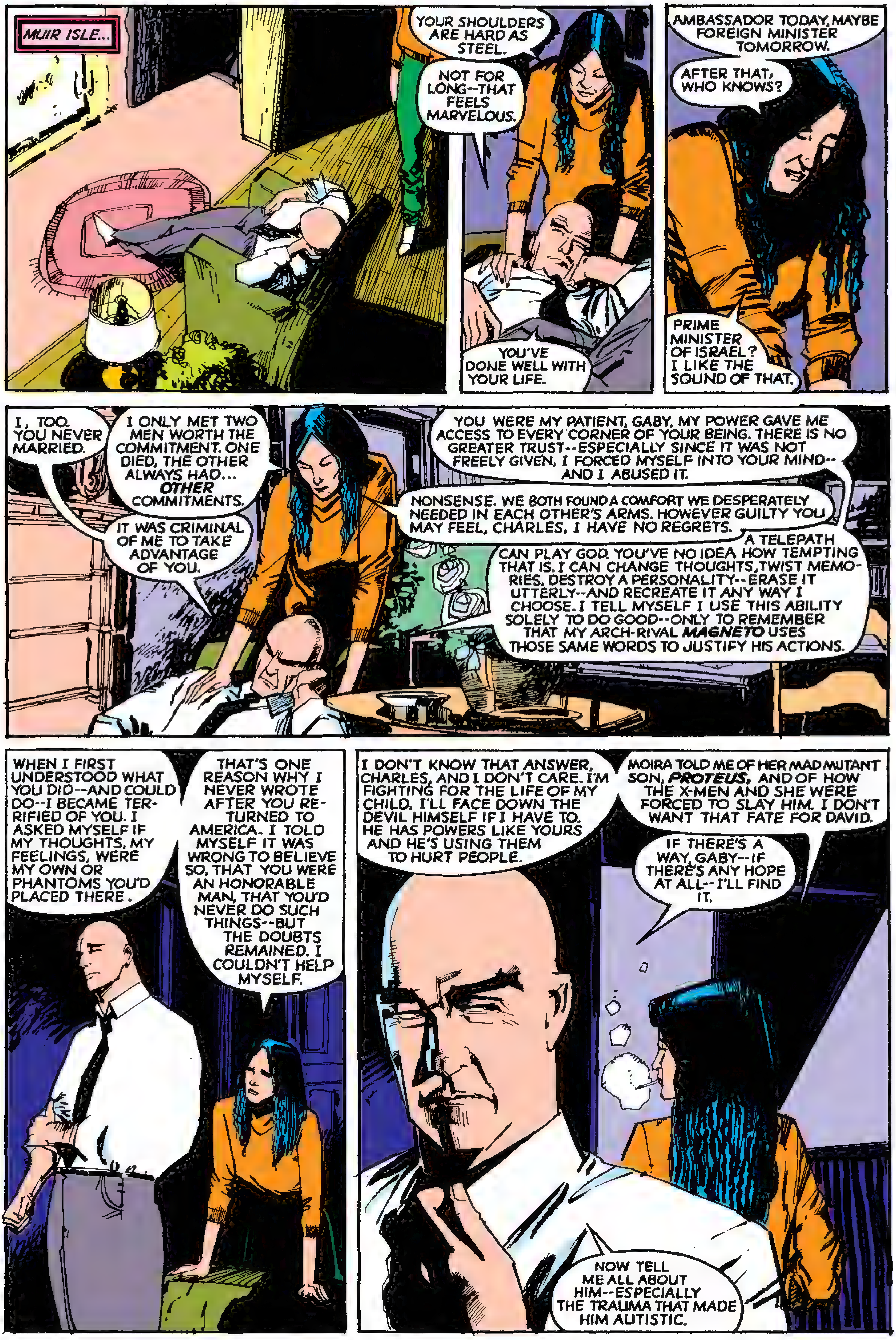

OH, REALLY?
URRRKK!?!
ARROGANT FOOL, TO THINK ME SO EASILY BEATEN! IT WAS AN ACT, DEAR, DARLING MANUEL, TO TEST THE LIMITS OF BOTH YOUR POWER AND AMBITION.
I COULD KILL YOU--SNAP YOUR NECK LIKE THE PROVERBIAL TWIG--AND BELIEVE ME, BOY, I'M TEMPTED.
BUT INSTEAD, I'M PLACING PSYCHIC INHIBITORS IN YOUR BRAIN--UNTIL I REMOVE THEM, YOU CANNOT USE YOUR EMPATHIC TALENT. AND THAT DAY WILL COME WHEN I DECIDE YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR LESSON.
CONSIDER THIS A FINAL WARNING, MANUEL--
--IGNORE IT AT YOUR PERIL.
ULLAPOOL, ON THE WESTERN COAST OF SCOTLAND...
HOW MANY PICTURES YOU GONNA TAKE, DOUG?
AS MANY AS I CAN GET, CHIEF.
WARLOCK, REMEMBER WHAT THE PROFESSOR SAID--AROUND HUMANS YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LOOK HUMAN!
APOLOGIES. SELF FORGOT.
THE FISHING FLEET'S IN--SEE ALL THE GULLS TRYING TO SCARF THEIR SUPPER!
THERE ARE SO MANY--LOCKE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
STOP IT--NO!
HER CRY COMES TOO LATE...
...AS THE BIRD IS TRANSFORMED INTO A TECHNO-ORGANIC CONSTRUCT LIKE WARLOCK, AND ITS LIFEGLOW--ITS LIVING ENERGY--ABSORBED.
THIS IS HOW HE CONSUMES FOOD.
ARE YOU CRAZY, PULLING THAT STUNT IN PUBLIC--SUPPOSE SOMEONE SAW--?!
M-MY HAND--?! I DIDN'T THINK WHEN I GRABBED AT HIM--
--IF I'M INFECTED WITH THE TRANSMUTATION VIRUS, I'LL CHANGE, TOO. THERE'S NO CURE. I'LL BE THAT WAY FOREVER!!
LOCKE, DON'T YOU FREAK!
DANI--ANGERFEAR--SELF'S FAULT!
NO NEED--TOUCH DID NO HARM.
CALM DOWN, FELLA--RELAX, BOTH OF YOU! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. EVERYTHING'S OKAY, WE'RE ALL GONNA BE FINE!
FOR MERCY'S SAKE, LOCKE, SHAPESHIFT BACK TO HUMAN!

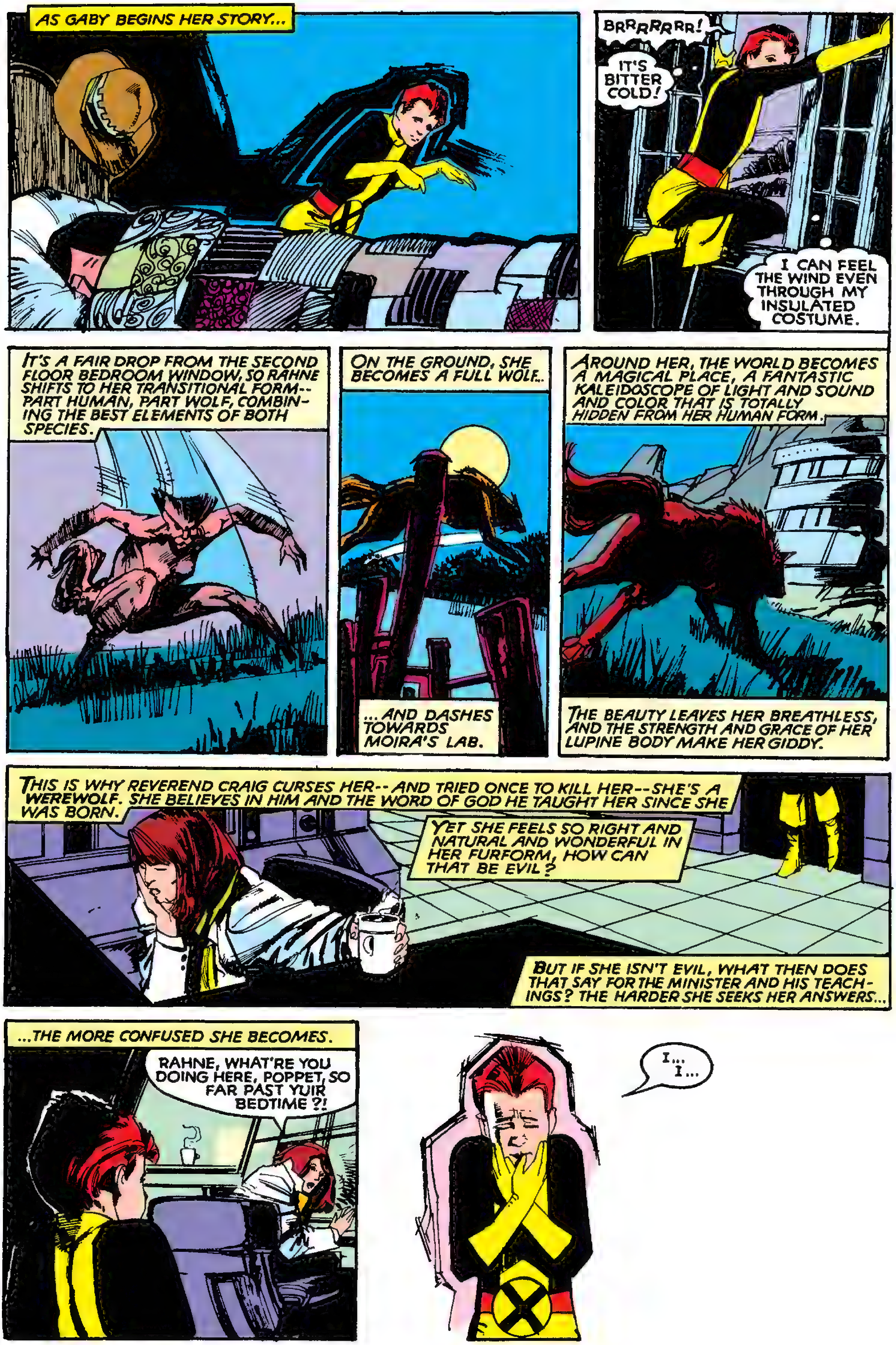

SELF LACKS WORDS TO EXPRESS SHAME.
MUTANTS ARE FIRST FRIENDS SELF EVER HAD, BEST SELF WILL *EVER* HAVE, SELF WOULD TERMINATE RATHER THAN HURT YOU.
I KNOW, LOCKE. IT WAS AS MUCH MY OWN FAULT.
BUT UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND OUR WORLD, NO TRANSMUTING MEALS WITHOUT CHECKING WITH ME OR SAM GUTHRIE OR THE PROF, ALL RIGHT?
POOR WEE BIRD.
IF SELF PROVIDES ENERGY, RAHNE, IT WILL REANIMATE AND FLY AGAIN.
*REALLY,* LOCKE--THAT'D BE WONDERFUL--WOULDN'T IT, DANI? T' BRING THE DEAD T' LIFE--?!?
*RAHNE SINCLAIR!*
BY WHAT RIGHT D'YOU PROFANE GOD'S GOOD LAND BY YOUR UNHOLY PRESENCE?!
*REVEREND CRAIG!*
*THAT'S* THE MAN WHO RAISED YOU?
LEAVE THIS PLACE, YE DINNA BELONG HERE, AMONG *TRUE* PEOPLE.
HOLD YUIR TONGUE, MISSY! YON BRAT IS A SPAWN OF *SATAN*...
LAY OFF, MISTER. WE'RE MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS, WHY DON'T YOU DO THE SAME?!
...AND ANY WHO CONSORT WITH HER ARE AS DAMNED AND DOOMED AS SHE!
DON'T ARGUE, DANI, PLEASE--LET'S JUST GO.
*MEANWHILE...*
I SENSE TROUBLE WITH THE MUTANTS--THEY'RE UPSET, ESPECIALLY RAHNE, BUT IT DOESN'T APPEAR TO REQUIRE MY INTERVENTION.
THAT'S FORTUNATE, BECAUSE I *SUSPECT* I'LL NEED ALL MY PSYCHIC FACULTIES FOR THE WORK AT HAND.
MY SPIRIT-SELF HAS REACHED THE ASTRAL PLANE...
...BUT THE PATH TO DAVID'S MIND IS BLOCKED BY A *PSIWALL.*
IT PROTECTS HIS CONSCIOUSNESS FROM A WORLD TOO TERRIBLE TO BEAR.
WITH GABY, I WAS SO SURE OF MYSELF, THAT I HAD THE ANSWERS, KNEW WHAT WAS BEST. I FREED HER FROM THE PRISON OF HER MIND--BUT, IN THE PROCESS, FORCED HER TO RELIVE THE HORRORS OF HER CHILDHOOD. ONCE MORE, SHE SAW HER PARENTS SLAUGHTERED, ENDURED THE DEGRADATION OF BODY AND SPIRIT.
A PART OF HER HAS ALWAYS HATED ME FOR THAT.

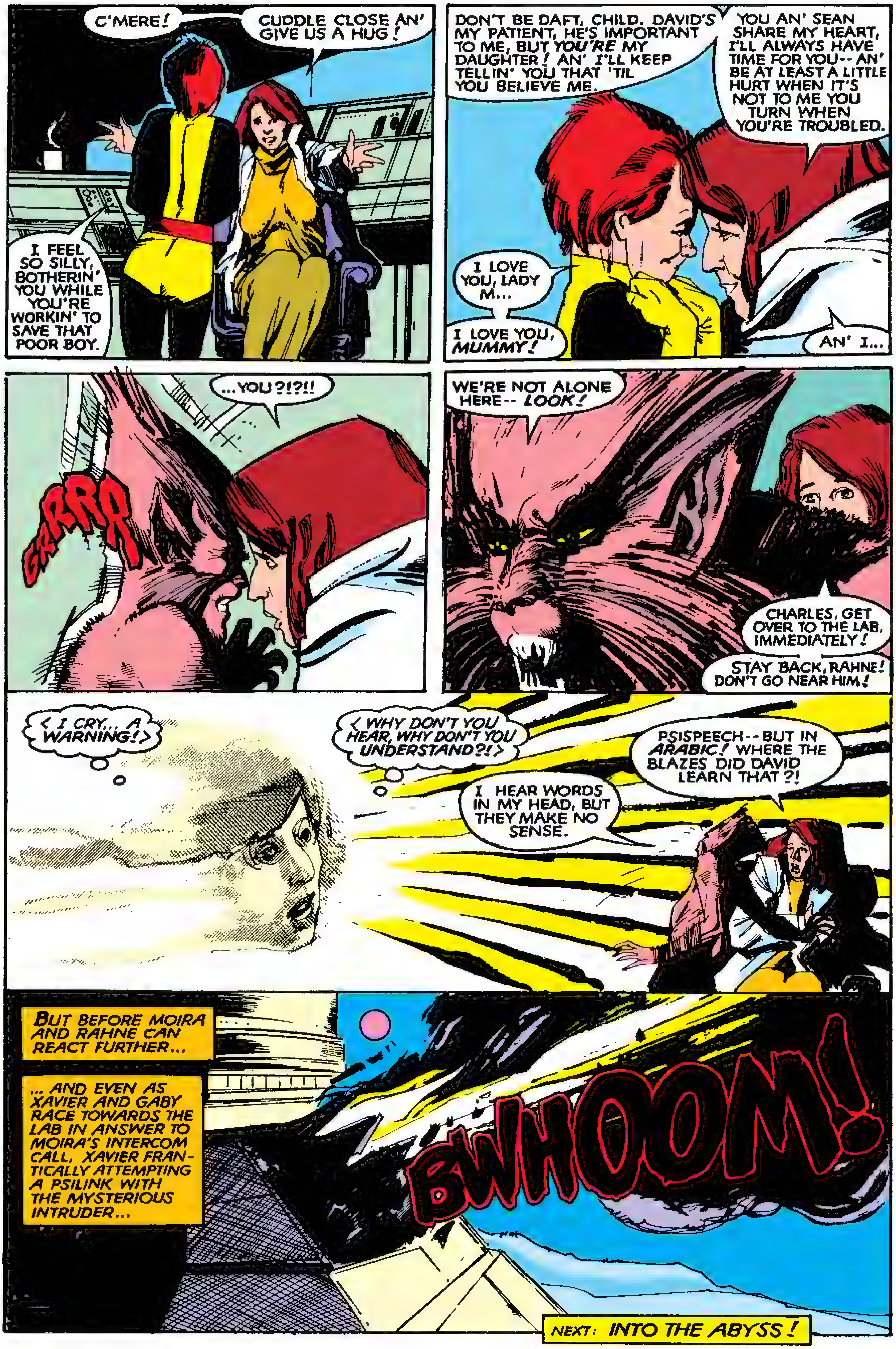

AND NOW, I MUST DO THE SAME FOR HER SON.
I TELL MYSELF I'M HELPING THE BOY...
...BUT, IN MY HEART, I'M NO LONGER SURE.
WHAT--?!?
A FACE-- FORMING IN THE WALL, AS IF PUSHED THROUGH FROM THE OTHER SIDE.
HIS FEATURES ARE ARABIC-- *PSISPEECH!* HE'S A *TELEPATH*, TRYING TO COMMUNICATE--!
GOOD--
--LORD!
WITHOUT WARNING, FLAME BLASTS FROM THE FIGURE'S MOUTH AND EYES...
...HURLING XAVIER BACK INTO HIS BODY...
HAHAHAHAHAHAAA
...AND THAT BODY, ALONG WITH THOSE AROUND IT, OUT OF THE ROOM.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

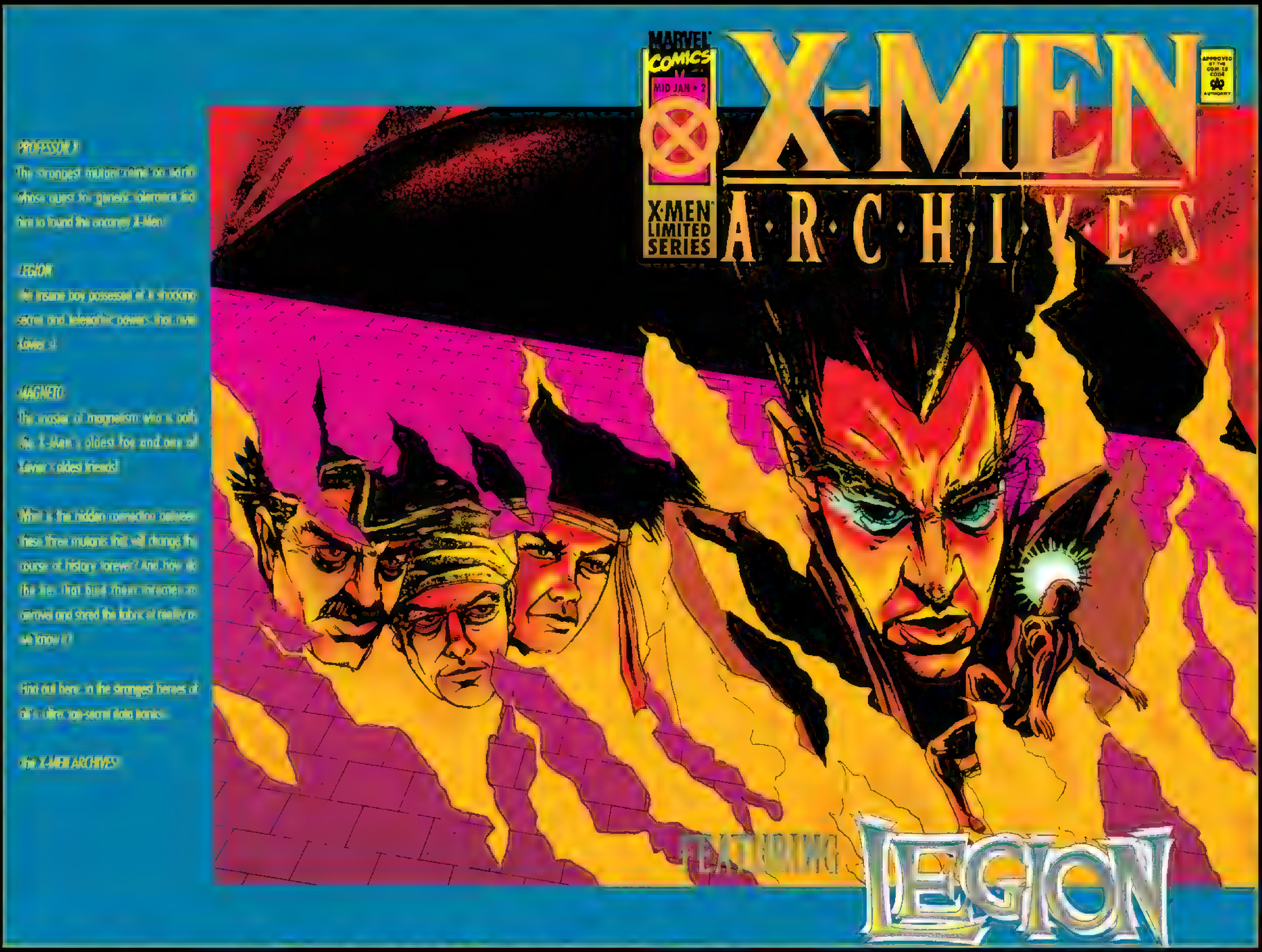

DAVID'S STOPPED LAUGHING, HE'S SITTING AS PLACIDLY AS BEFORE.
THERE WAS TRIUMPH IN HIS VOICE! HE *KNEW* WHAT WAS HAPPENING, CHARLES, HE WAS MOCKING US!
YES AND NO. THE THOUGHTS DIRECTING DAVID'S ACTIONS SEEM SOMEHOW *ALIEN*--AS IF THERE'S A PORTION OF HIS MIND THAT *ISN'T* HIM.
MY HEART--POUNDING SO HARD IT HURTS. I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED, CALLISTO WARNED ME WHAT TO EXPECT. I...I MUSTN'T LET THE OTHERS SEE. THEY'RE DEPENDING ON ME, THEY MUSTN'T KNOW.
THOUSANDS OF MILES TO THE WEST AND SOUTH...
...ON A TROPIC ISLE SET IN THE HEART OF THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE...
...ALEYTYS FORRESTER IS WAKENED BY...
A SCREAM--
--MAGNETO!
HE SOUNDS LIKE HE'S IN AGONY!
HIS POWER'S TEARING THE PALACE APART--FROM THE WAY THE BUILDING'S SHAKING, MAYBE THE WHOLE ISLAND AS WELL!
BUT HE'S THE *MASTER OF MAGNETISM*--ONE OF THE DEADLIEST MUTANTS ON THE PLANET--WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HURT HIM SO?!
THIS IS *CRAZY!*
HIS *BED*--
--IT'S GOING OUT THE *WINDOW!*
A THOUSAND FEET BELOW, THE ATLANTIC SURF CRASHES AGAINST AN ANCIENT SEAWALL...


...YET NOT FOR A MOMENT DOES SHE HESITATE.
HE'S HAVING A NIGHTMARE-- -- I'VE GOT TO WAKE HIM!
HE'S FIGHTING ME, HE THINKS I'M A PART OF IT!
WHAT'S HE SAYING, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE?!
MAGNETO, IT'S LEE FORRESTER! YOU'RE SAFE-- WAKE UP!
WHUH--?!?
WHERE AM I--CAPTAIN FORRESTER, IT'S YOU! WHAT IS HAPPENING?!
I'LL TELL YOU LATER, WHEN WE'RE--
FALLING!
DON'T BE AFRAID, MY POWER WILL PROTECT US!
KRTHOOM
WHUMP
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?! THAT WAS SOME DREAM!
IT... WAS OF A TIME AND PLACE I THOUGHT FOREVER...
...BURIED.
I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH... DESOLATION IN YOUR VOICE. WHAT DID HAPPEN?
DEATH. RESURRECTION.
I'D HAVE DIED TONIGHT, I THINK, IF NOT FOR YOU.
TWICE NOW, I OWE YOU MY LIFE.
MY PLEASURE.
THE FIRST KISS IS TENTATIVE, BOTH GRIPPED BY A SHY NERVOUSNESS NEITHER WILL ADMIT TO.
THE SECOND IS LESS SO...
...THE THIRD, NOT AT ALL.
AND WHEN AT LAST, MAGNETO SLEEPS, LEE TASTES SALT WATER ON HIS CHEEKS AND WONDERS IF IT IS SALT SPRAY...
...OR TEARS.


MUIR ISLE...
YOUR SHOULDERS ARE HARD AS STEEL.
NOT FOR LONG--THAT FEELS MARVELOUS.
YOU'VE DONE WELL WITH YOUR LIFE.
AMBASSADOR TODAY, MAYBE FOREIGN MINISTER TOMORROW.
AFTER THAT, WHO KNOWS?
PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL? I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
I, TOO. YOU NEVER MARRIED.
I ONLY MET TWO MEN WORTH THE COMMITMENT. ONE DIED, THE OTHER ALWAYS HAD... ***OTHER*** COMMITMENTS.
IT WAS CRIMINAL OF ME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU.
YOU WERE MY PATIENT, GABY. MY POWER GAVE ME ACCESS TO EVERY CORNER OF YOUR BEING. THERE IS NO GREATER TRUST--ESPECIALLY SINCE IT WAS NOT FREELY GIVEN. I FORCED MYSELF INTO YOUR MIND--AND I ABUSED IT.
NONSENSE. WE BOTH FOUND A COMFORT WE DESPERATELY NEEDED IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS. HOWEVER GUILTY YOU MAY FEEL, CHARLES, I HAVE NO REGRETS.
A TELEPATH CAN PLAY GOD. YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW TEMPTING THAT IS. I CAN CHANGE THOUGHTS, TWIST MEMORIES, DESTROY A PERSONALITY--ERASE IT UTTERLY--AND RECREATE IT ANY WAY I CHOOSE. I TELL MYSELF I USE THIS ABILITY SOLELY TO DO GOOD--ONLY TO REMEMBER THAT MY ARCH-RIVAL ***MAGNETO*** USES THOSE SAME WORDS TO JUSTIFY HIS ACTIONS.
WHEN I FIRST UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU DID--AND COULD DO--I BECAME TERRIFIED OF YOU. I ASKED MYSELF IF MY THOUGHTS, MY FEELINGS, WERE MY OWN OR PHANTOMS YOU'D PLACED THERE.
THAT'S ONE REASON WHY I NEVER WROTE AFTER YOU RETURNED TO AMERICA. I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS WRONG TO BELIEVE SO, THAT YOU WERE AN HONORABLE MAN, THAT YOU'D NEVER DO SUCH THINGS--BUT THE DOUBTS REMAINED. I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF.
I DON'T KNOW THAT ANSWER, CHARLES, AND I DON'T CARE. I'M FIGHTING FOR THE LIFE OF MY CHILD. I'LL FACE DOWN THE DEVIL HIMSELF IF I HAVE TO. HE HAS POWERS LIKE YOURS AND HE'S USING THEM TO HURT PEOPLE.
MOIRA TOLD ME OF HER MAD MUTANT SON, ***PROTEUS***, AND OF HOW THE X-MEN AND SHE WERE FORCED TO SLAY HIM. I DON'T WANT THAT FATE FOR DAVID.
IF THERE'S A WAY, GABY--IF THERE'S ANY HOPE AT ALL--I'LL FIND IT.
NOW TELL ME ALL ABOUT HIM--ESPECIALLY THE TRAUMA THAT MADE HIM AUTISTIC.


AS GABY BEGINS HER STORY...
BRRRRRRR!
IT'S BITTER COLD!
I CAN FEEL THE WIND EVEN THROUGH MY INSULATED COSTUME.
IT'S A FAIR DROP FROM THE SECOND FLOOR BEDROOM WINDOW, SO RAHNE SHIFTS TO HER TRANSITIONAL FORM--PART HUMAN, PART WOLF, COMBINING THE BEST ELEMENTS OF BOTH SPECIES.
ON THE GROUND, SHE BECOMES A FULL WOLF...
...AND DASHES TOWARDS MOIRA'S LAB.
AROUND HER, THE WORLD BECOMES A MAGICAL PLACE, A FANTASTIC KALEIDOSCOPE OF LIGHT AND SOUND AND COLOR THAT IS TOTALLY HIDDEN FROM HER HUMAN FORM.
THE BEAUTY LEAVES HER BREATHLESS, AND THE STRENGTH AND GRACE OF HER LUPINE BODY MAKE HER GIDDY.
THIS IS WHY REVEREND CRAIG CURSES HER--AND TRIED ONCE TO KILL HER--SHE'S A WEREWOLF. SHE BELIEVES IN HIM AND THE WORD OF GOD HE TAUGHT HER SINCE SHE WAS BORN.
YET SHE FEELS SO RIGHT AND NATURAL AND WONDERFUL IN HER FURFORM, HOW CAN THAT BE EVIL?
BUT IF SHE ISN'T EVIL, WHAT THEN DOES THAT SAY FOR THE MINISTER AND HIS TEACHINGS? THE HARDER SHE SEEKS HER ANSWERS...
...THE MORE CONFUSED SHE BECOMES.
RAHNE, WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, POPPET, SO FAR PAST YUIR BEDTIME?!
I... I...


C'MERE!
CUDDLE CLOSE AN' GIVE US A HUG!
I FEEL SO SILLY, BOTHERIN' YOU WHILE YOU'RE WORKIN' TO SAVE THAT POOR BOY.
DON'T BE DAFT, CHILD. DAVID'S MY PATIENT, HE'S IMPORTANT TO ME, BUT *YOU'RE* MY DAUGHTER! AN' I'LL KEEP TELLIN' YOU THAT 'TIL YOU BELIEVE ME.
YOU AN' SEAN SHARE MY HEART, I'LL ALWAYS HAVE TIME FOR YOU-- AN' BE AT LEAST A LITTLE HURT WHEN IT'S NOT TO ME YOU TURN WHEN YOU'RE TROUBLED.
I LOVE YOU, LADY M...
I LOVE YOU, *MUMMY!*
AN' I...
GRRRR
...YOU?!?!!
WE'RE NOT ALONE HERE-- *LOOK!*
CHARLES, GET OVER TO THE LAB, IMMEDIATELY!
STAY BACK, RAHNE! DON'T GO NEAR HIM!
*< I CRY... A WARNING! >*
*< WHY DON'T YOU HEAR, WHY DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?! >*
PSISPEECH-- BUT IN *ARABIC!* WHERE THE BLAZES DID DAVID LEARN THAT?!
I HEAR WORDS IN MY HEAD, BUT THEY MAKE NO SENSE.
*BUT BEFORE MOIRA AND RAHNE CAN REACT FURTHER...*
*... AND EVEN AS XAVIER AND GABY RACE TOWARDS THE LAB IN ANSWER TO MOIRA'S INTERCOM CALL, XAVIER FRANTICALLY ATTEMPTING A PSILINK WITH THE MYSTERIOUS INTRUDER...*
BWHOOM!
NEXT: *INTO THE ABYSS!*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FEATURING
LEGION

*PROFESSOR X*

The strongest mutant mind on earth whose quest for genetic tolerance led him to found the uncanny X-Men!

*LEGION*

The insane boy possessed of a shocking secret and telepathic powers that rival Xavier's!

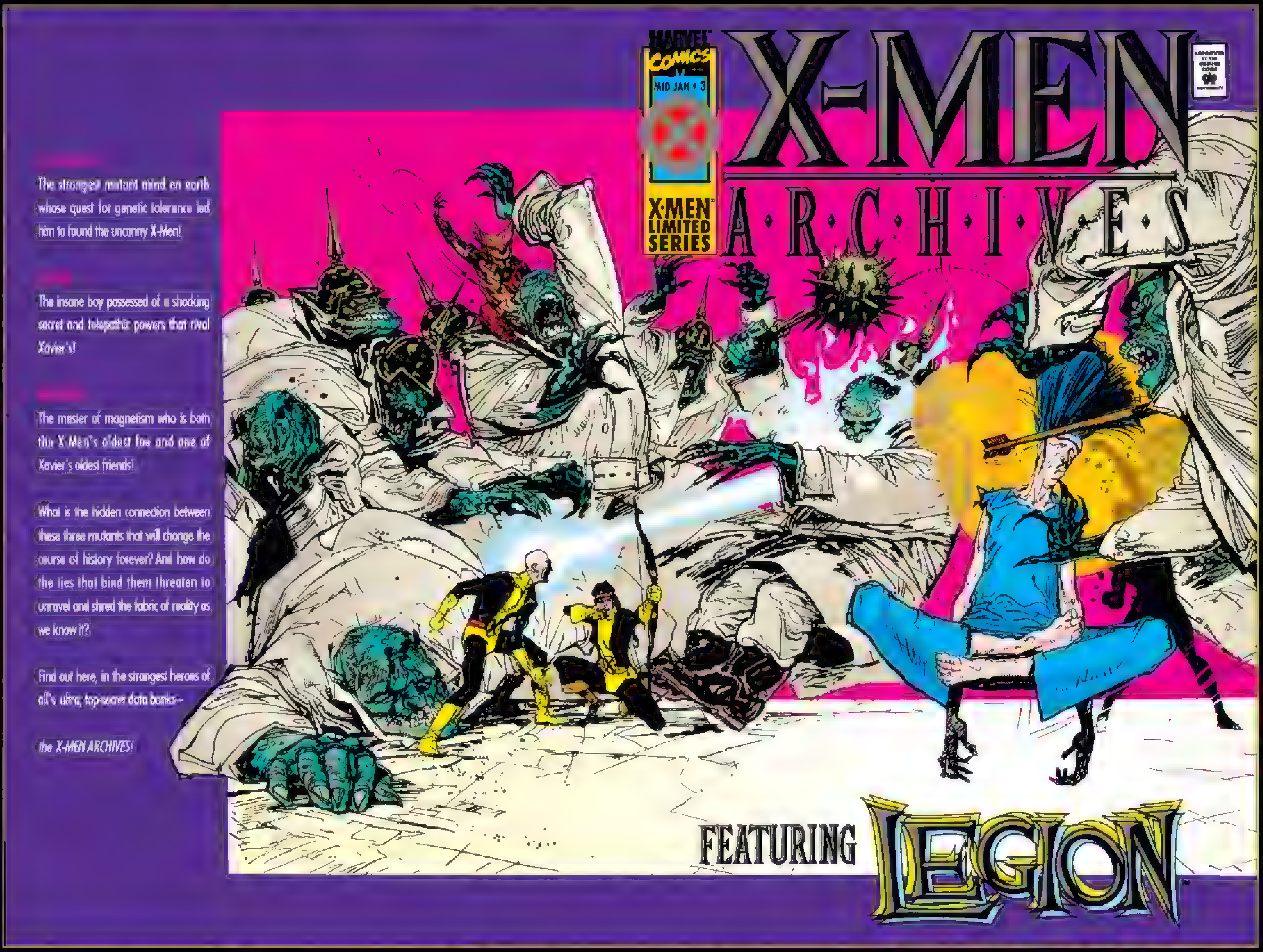
*MAGNETO*

The master of magnetism who is both the X-Men's oldest foe and one of Xavier's oldest friends!

What is the hidden connection between these three mutants that will change the course of history forever? And how do the ties that bind them threaten to unravel and shred the fabric of reality as we know it?

Find out here, in the strangest heroes of all's ultra, top-secret data banks--

*the X-MEN ARCHIVES!*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***X-MEN ARCHIVES* #2-3 REPRINTED *NEW MUTANTS* #27-28 WITH MODERN-STYLE COLORING. COVER ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ**

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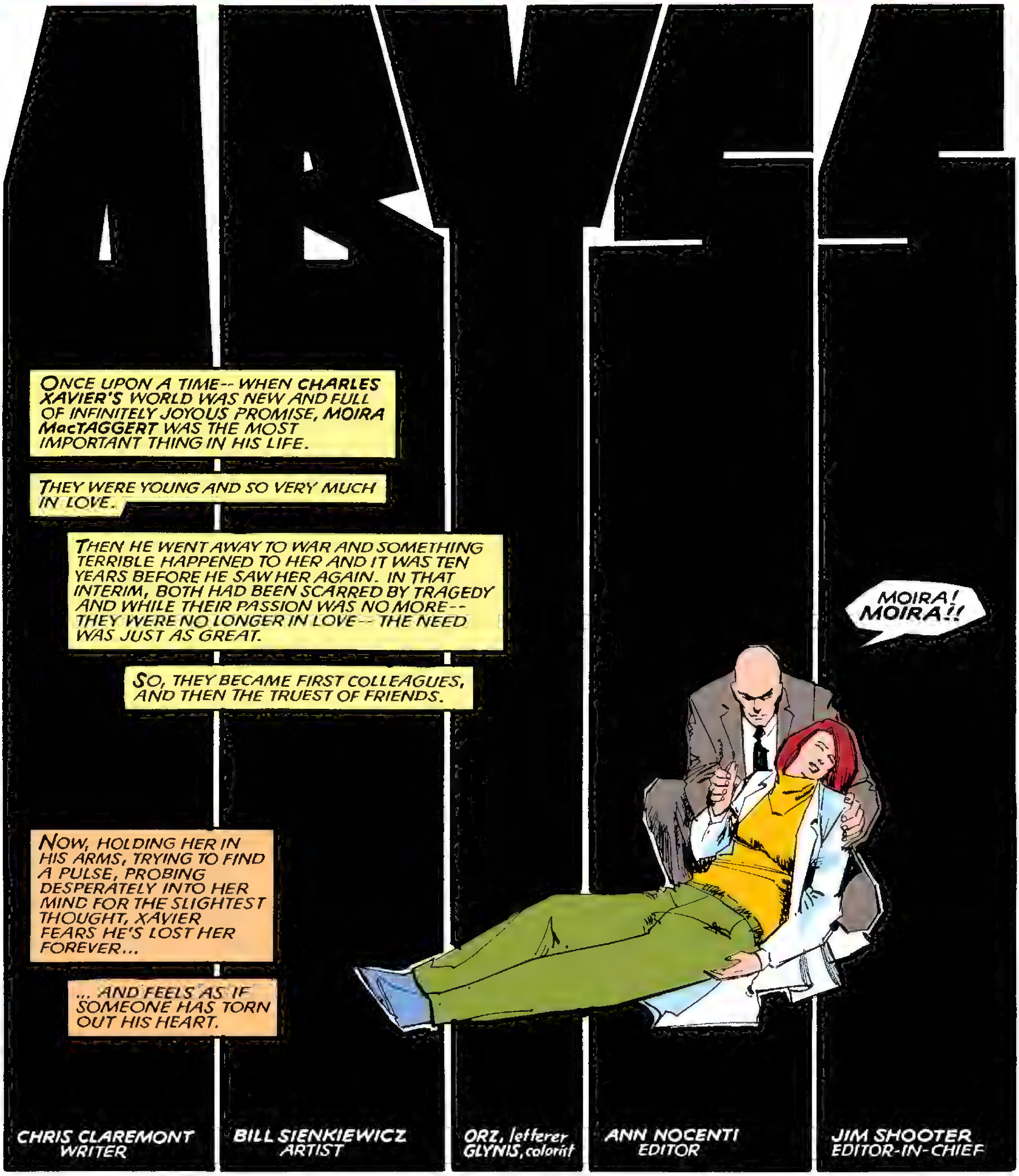
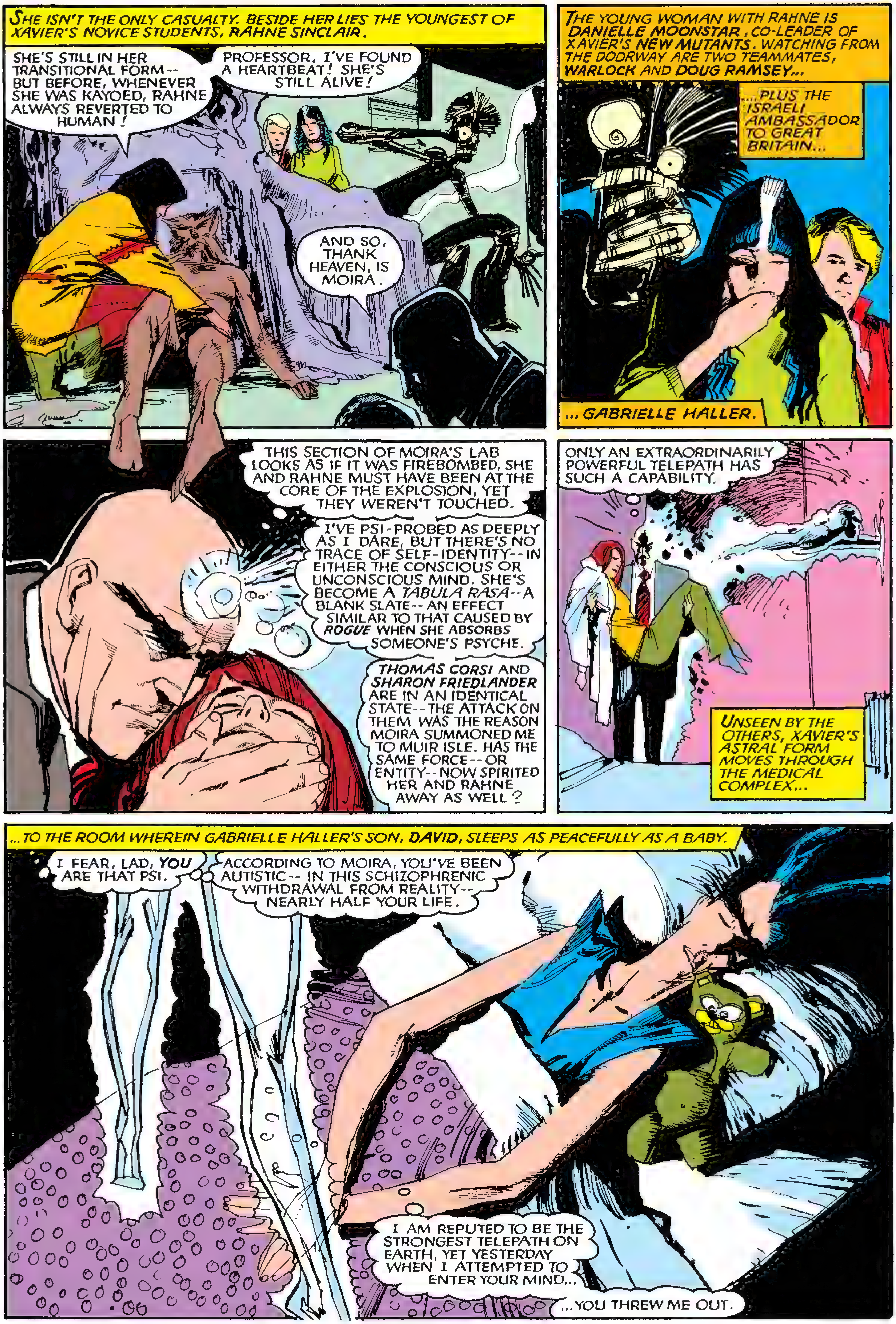
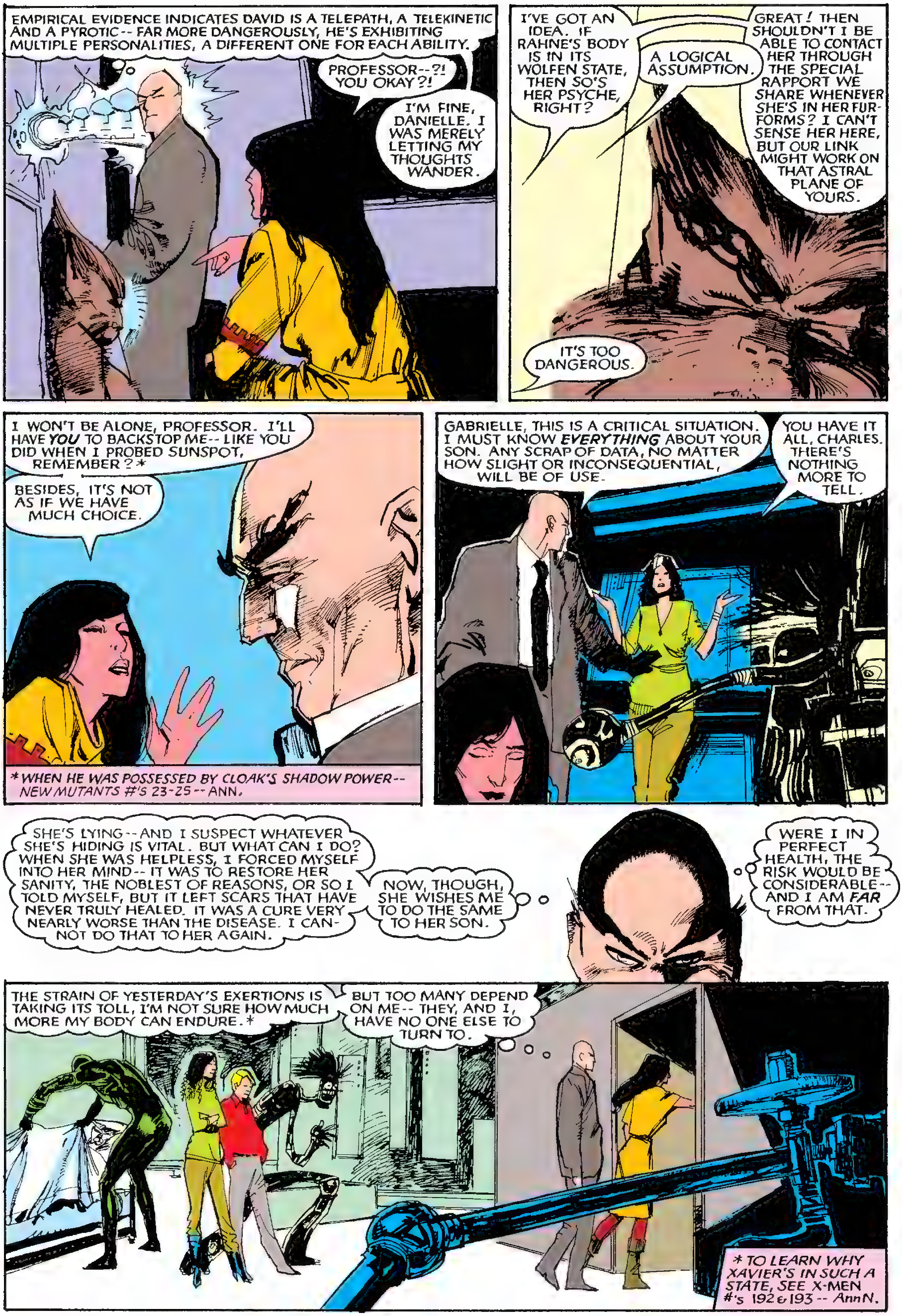
STAN LEE PRESENTS...

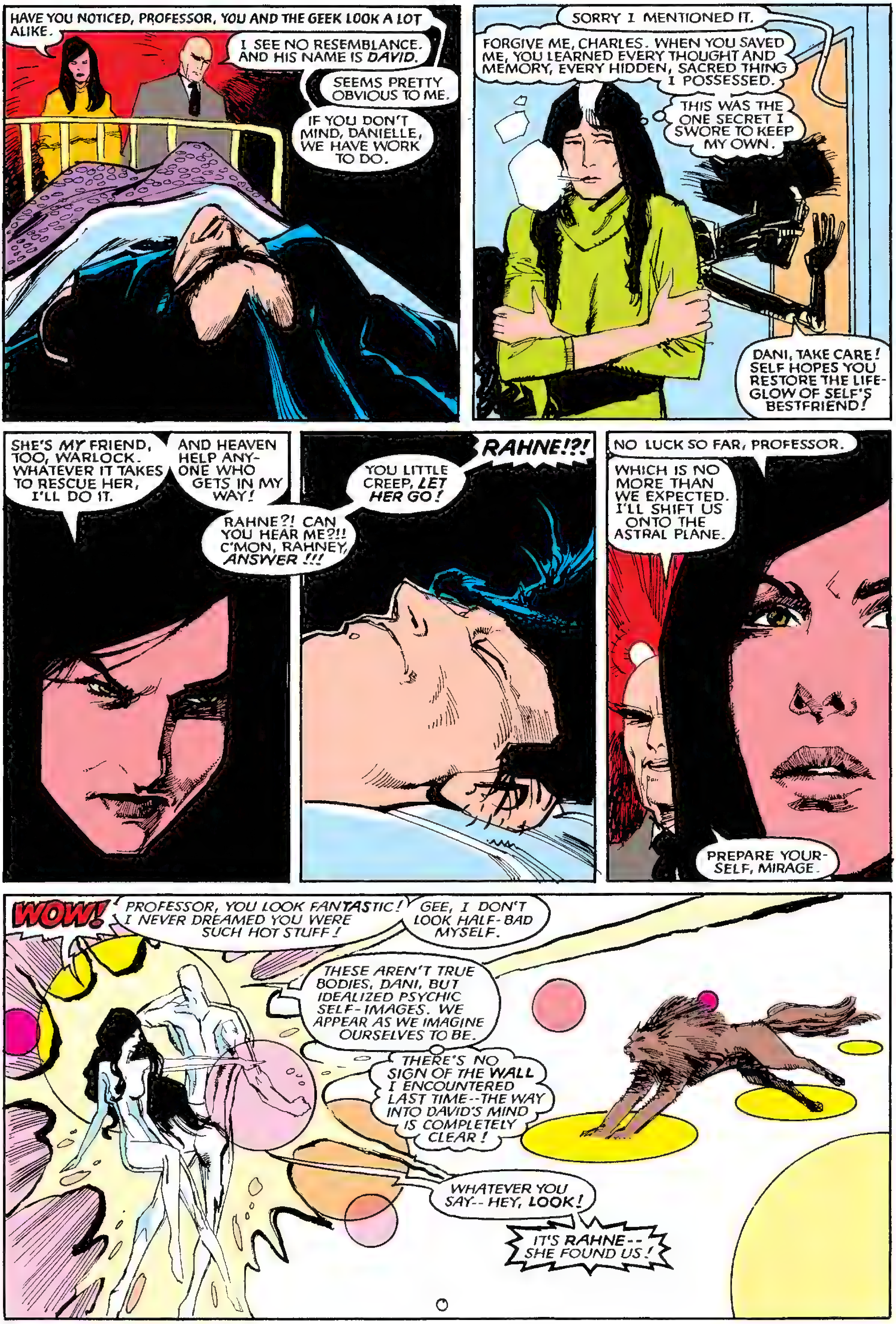
# INTO THE ABYSS

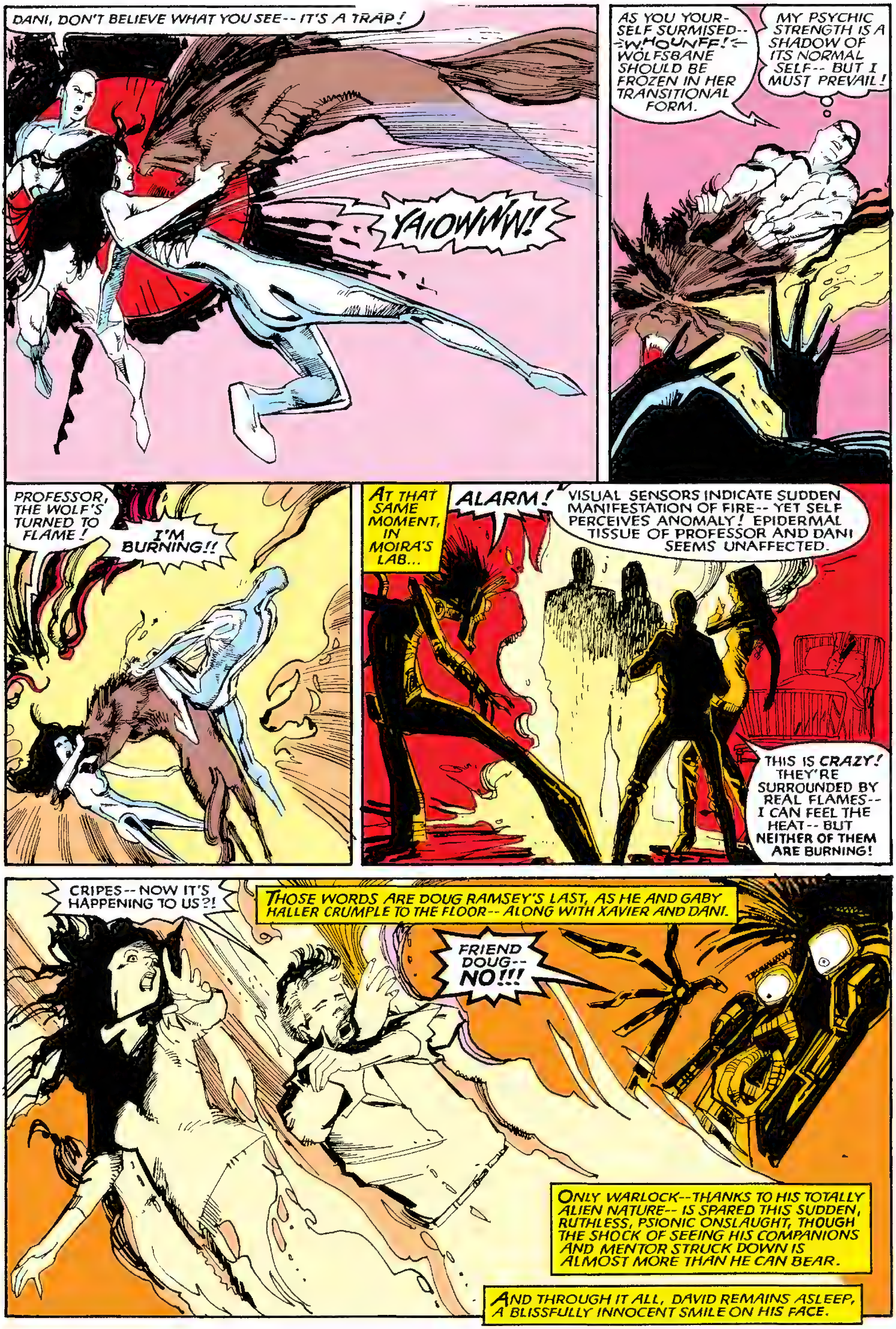

ONCE UPON A TIME-- WHEN CHARLES XAVIER'S WORLD WAS NEW AND FULL OF INFINITELY JOYOUS PROMISE, MOIRA MacTAGGERT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN HIS LIFE.
THEY WERE YOUNG AND SO VERY MUCH IN LOVE.
THEN HE WENT AWAY TO WAR AND SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO HER AND IT WAS TEN YEARS BEFORE HE SAW HER AGAIN. IN THAT INTERIM, BOTH HAD BEEN SCARRED BY TRAGEDY AND WHILE THEIR PASSION WAS NO MORE-- THEY WERE NO LONGER IN LOVE-- THE NEED WAS JUST AS GREAT.
SO, THEY BECAME FIRST COLLEAGUES, AND THEN THE TRUEST OF FRIENDS.
MOIRA! MOIRA!!
NOW, HOLDING HER IN HIS ARMS, TRYING TO FIND A PULSE, PROBING DESPERATELY INTO HER MIND FOR THE SLIGHTEST THOUGHT, XAVIER FEARS HE'S LOST HER FOREVER...
... AND FEELS AS IF SOMEONE HAS TORN OUT HIS HEART.

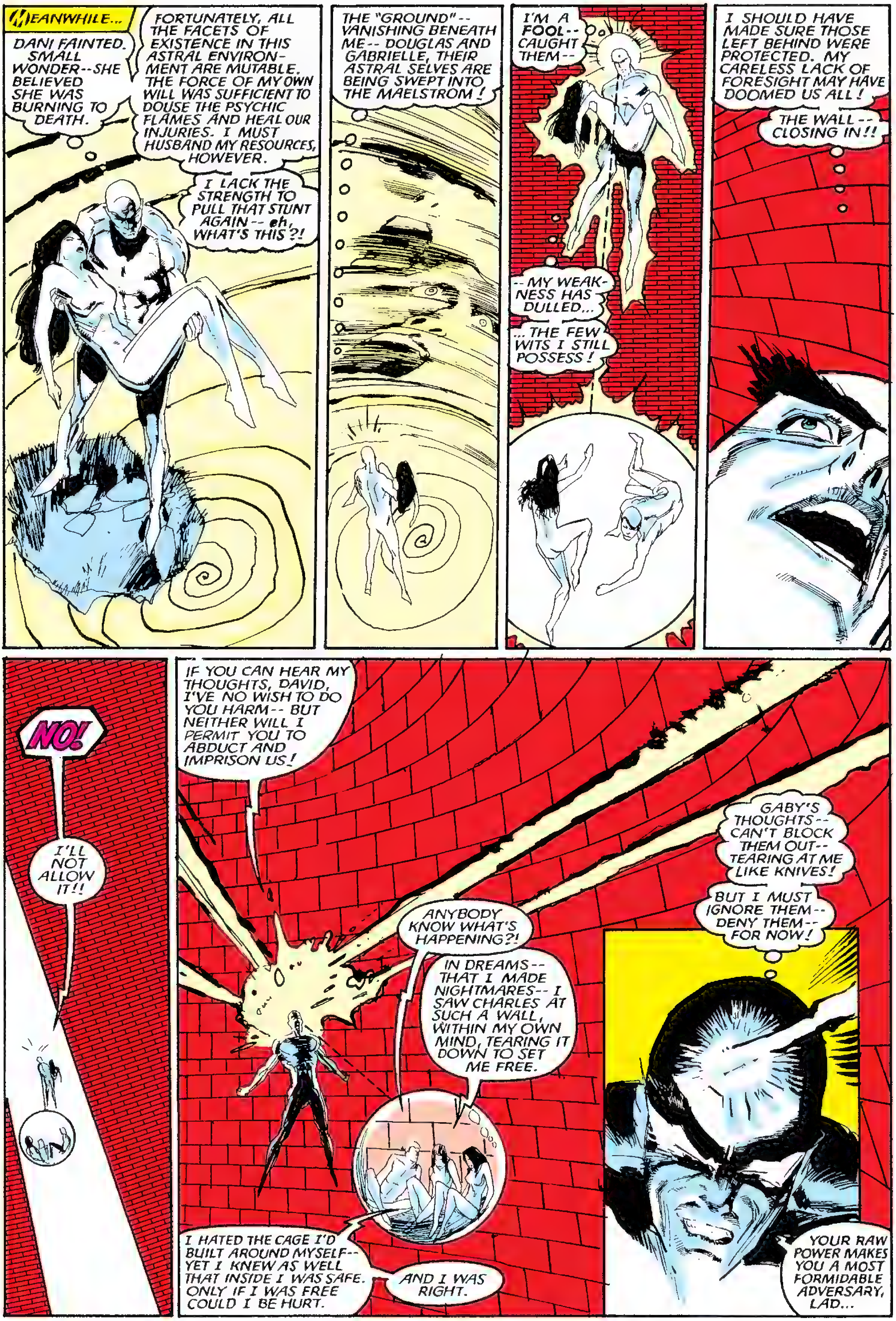
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
BILL SIENKIEWICZ ARTIST
ORZ, letterer GLYNIS, colorist
ANN NOCENTI EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

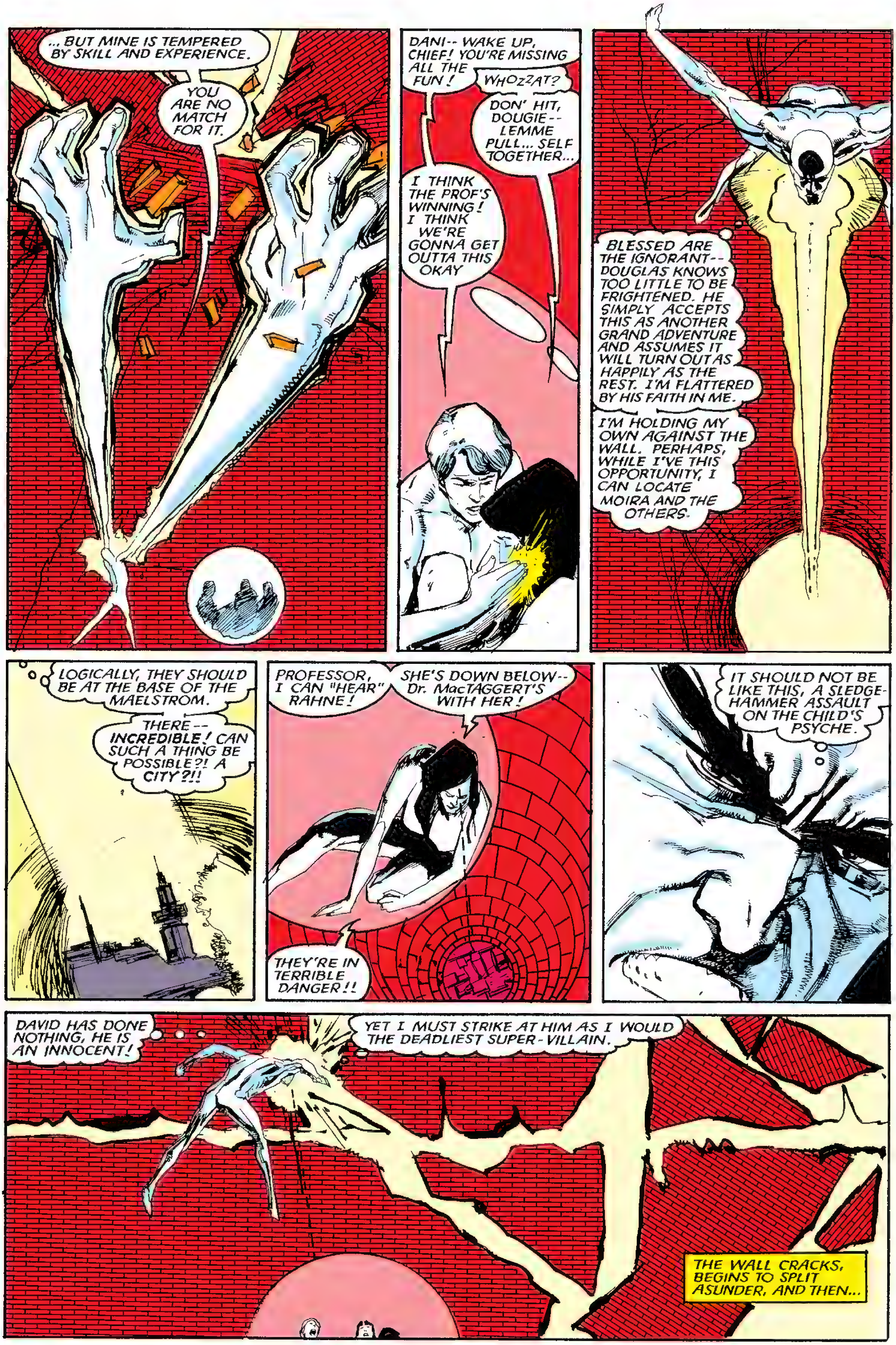

SHE ISN'T THE ONLY CASUALTY. BESIDE HER LIES THE YOUNGEST OF XAVIER'S NOVICE STUDENTS, RAHNE SINCLAIR.
SHE'S STILL IN HER TRANSITIONAL FORM -- BUT BEFORE, WHENEVER SHE WAS KAYOED, RAHNE ALWAYS REVERTED TO HUMAN!
PROFESSOR, I'VE FOUND A HEARTBEAT! SHE'S STILL ALIVE!
AND SO, THANK HEAVEN, IS MOIRA.
THE YOUNG WOMAN WITH RAHNE IS DANIELLE MOONSTAR, CO-LEADER OF XAVIER'S NEW MUTANTS. WATCHING FROM THE DOORWAY ARE TWO TEAMMATES, WARLOCK AND DOUG RAMSEY...
...PLUS THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO GREAT BRITAIN...
...GABRIELLE HALLER.
THIS SECTION OF MOIRA'S LAB LOOKS AS IF IT WAS FIREBOMBED. SHE AND RAHNE MUST HAVE BEEN AT THE CORE OF THE EXPLOSION, YET THEY WEREN'T TOUCHED.
I'VE PSI-PROBED AS DEEPLY AS I DARE, BUT THERE'S NO TRACE OF SELF-IDENTITY -- IN EITHER THE CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS MIND. SHE'S BECOME A TABULA RASA -- A BLANK SLATE -- AN EFFECT SIMILAR TO THAT CAUSED BY ROGUE WHEN SHE ABSORBS SOMEONE'S PSYCHE.
THOMAS CORSI AND SHARON FRIEDLANDER ARE IN AN IDENTICAL STATE -- THE ATTACK ON THEM WAS THE REASON MOIRA SUMMONED ME TO MUIR ISLE. HAS THE SAME FORCE -- OR ENTITY -- NOW SPIRITED HER AND RAHNE AWAY AS WELL?
ONLY AN EXTRAORDINARILY POWERFUL TELEPATH HAS SUCH A CAPABILITY.
UNSEEN BY THE OTHERS, XAVIER'S ASTRAL FORM MOVES THROUGH THE MEDICAL COMPLEX...
...TO THE ROOM WHEREIN GABRIELLE HALLER'S SON, DAVID, SLEEPS AS PEACEFULLY AS A BABY.
I FEAR, LAD, YOU ARE THAT PSI.
ACCORDING TO MOIRA, YOU'VE BEEN AUTISTIC -- IN THIS SCHIZOPHRENIC WITHDRAWAL FROM REALITY -- NEARLY HALF YOUR LIFE.
I AM REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST TELEPATH ON EARTH, YET YESTERDAY WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO ENTER YOUR MIND...
...YOU THREW ME OUT.]

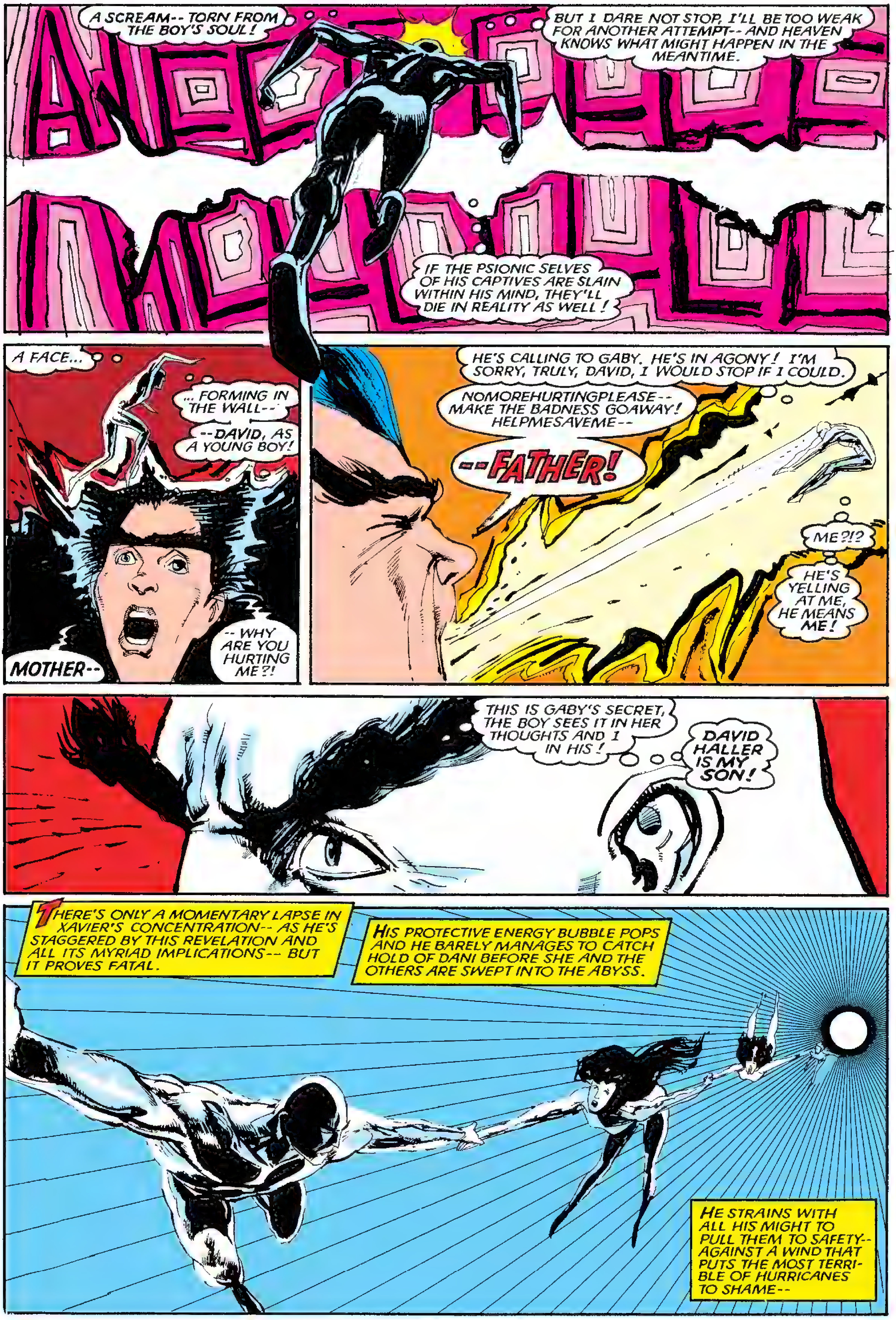

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE INDICATES DAVID IS A TELEPATH, A TELEKINETIC AND A PYROTIC -- FAR MORE DANGEROUSLY, HE'S EXHIBITING MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES, A DIFFERENT ONE FOR EACH ABILITY.
PROFESSOR--?! YOU OKAY?!
I'M FINE, DANIELLE. I WAS MERELY LETTING MY THOUGHTS WANDER.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA. IF RAHNE'S BODY IS IN ITS WOLFEN STATE, THEN SO'S HER PSYCHE, RIGHT?
A LOGICAL ASSUMPTION.
GREAT! THEN SHOULDN'T I BE ABLE TO CONTACT HER THROUGH THE SPECIAL RAPPORT WE SHARE WHENEVER SHE'S IN HER FUR-FORMS? I CAN'T SENSE HER HERE, BUT OUR LINK MIGHT WORK ON THAT ASTRAL PLANE OF YOURS.
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.
I WON'T BE ALONE, PROFESSOR. I'LL HAVE *YOU* TO BACKSTOP ME -- LIKE YOU DID WHEN I PROBED SUNSPOT, REMEMBER?*
BESIDES, IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
*WHEN HE WAS POSSESSED BY CLOAK'S SHADOW POWER -- NEW MUTANTS #'S 23-25 -- ANN.
GABRIELLE, THIS IS A CRITICAL SITUATION. I MUST KNOW *EVERYTHING* ABOUT YOUR SON. ANY SCRAP OF DATA, NO MATTER HOW SLIGHT OR INCONSEQUENTIAL, WILL BE OF USE.
YOU HAVE IT ALL, CHARLES. THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO TELL.
SHE'S LYING -- AND I SUSPECT WHATEVER SHE'S HIDING IS VITAL. BUT WHAT CAN I DO? WHEN SHE WAS HELPLESS, I FORCED MYSELF INTO HER MIND -- IT WAS TO RESTORE HER SANITY, THE NOBLEST OF REASONS, OR SO I TOLD MYSELF, BUT IT LEFT SCARS THAT HAVE NEVER TRULY HEALED. IT WAS A CURE VERY NEARLY WORSE THAN THE DISEASE. I CANNOT DO THAT TO HER AGAIN.
NOW, THOUGH, SHE WISHES ME TO DO THE SAME TO HER SON.
WERE I IN PERFECT HEALTH, THE RISK WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE -- AND I AM *FAR* FROM THAT.
THE STRAIN OF YESTERDAY'S EXERTIONS IS TAKING ITS TOLL, I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH MORE MY BODY CAN ENDURE.*
BUT TOO MANY DEPEND ON ME -- THEY, AND I, HAVE NO ONE ELSE TO TURN TO.
*TO LEARN WHY XAVIER'S IN SUCH A STATE, SEE X-MEN #'s 192 & 193 -- AnnN.

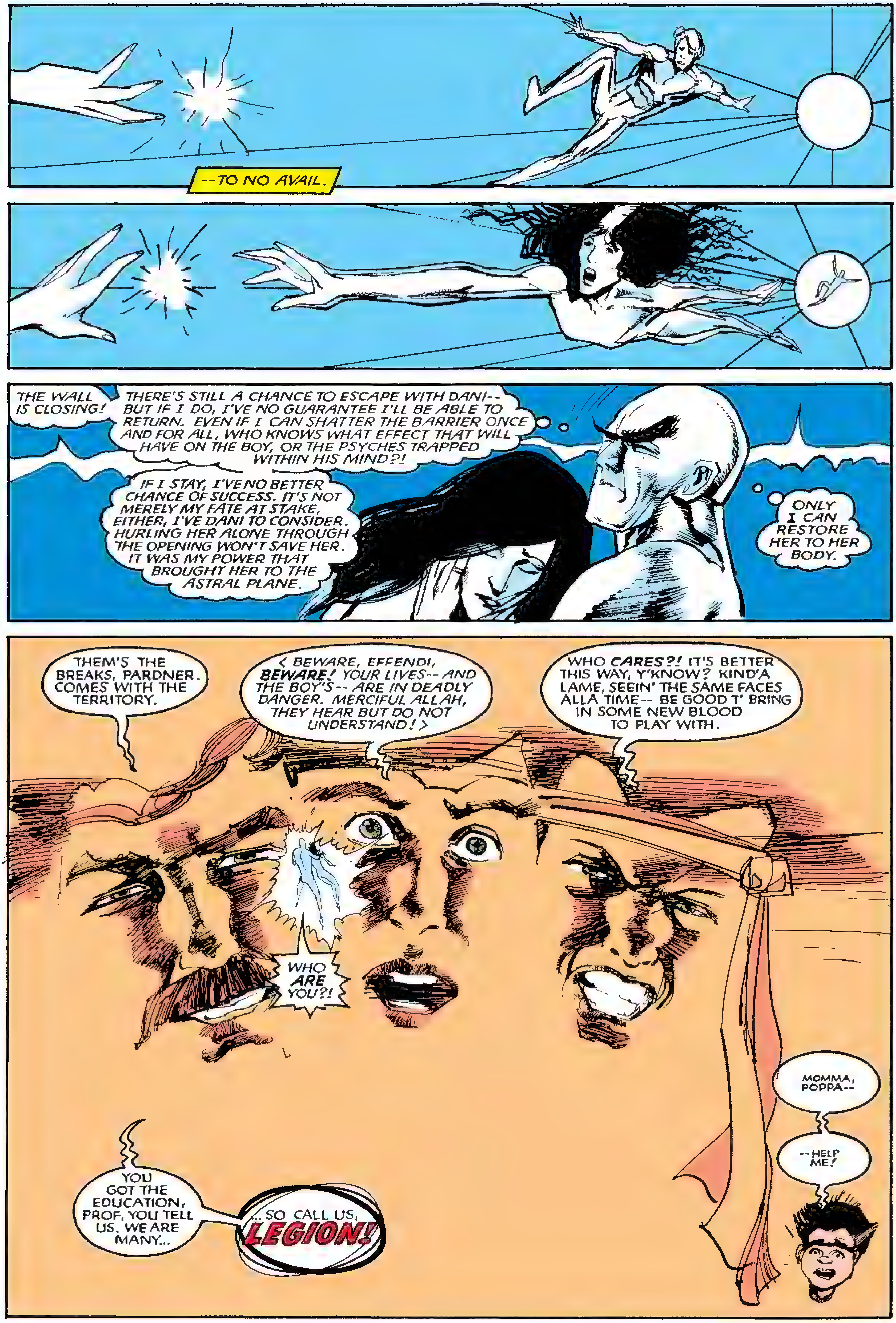

HAVE YOU NOTICED, PROFESSOR, YOU AND THE GEEK LOOK A LOT ALIKE.
I SEE NO RESEMBLANCE. AND HIS NAME IS *DAVID*.
SEEMS PRETTY OBVIOUS TO ME.
IF YOU DON'T MIND, DANIELLE, WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
SORRY I MENTIONED IT.
FORGIVE ME, CHARLES. WHEN YOU SAVED ME, YOU LEARNED EVERY THOUGHT AND MEMORY, EVERY HIDDEN, SACRED THING I POSSESSED.
THIS WAS THE ONE SECRET I SWORE TO KEEP MY OWN.
DANI, TAKE CARE! SELF HOPES YOU RESTORE THE LIFE-GLOW OF SELF'S BESTFRIEND!
SHE'S *MY* FRIEND, TOO, WARLOCK. WHATEVER IT TAKES TO RESCUE HER, I'LL DO IT.
AND HEAVEN HELP ANY-ONE WHO GETS IN MY WAY!
RAHNE!?!
YOU LITTLE CREEP, *LET HER GO!*
RAHNE?! CAN YOU HEAR ME?!! C'MON, RAHNEY, *ANSWER !!!*
NO LUCK SO FAR, PROFESSOR.
WHICH IS NO MORE THAN WE EXPECTED. I'LL SHIFT US ONTO THE ASTRAL PLANE.
PREPARE YOURSELF, MIRAGE.
WOW!
*PROFESSOR, YOU LOOK FANTASTIC! I NEVER DREAMED YOU WERE SUCH HOT STUFF!*
*GEE, I DON'T LOOK HALF-BAD MYSELF.*
*THESE AREN'T TRUE BODIES, DANI, BUT IDEALIZED PSYCHIC SELF-IMAGES. WE APPEAR AS WE IMAGINE OURSELVES TO BE.*
*THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE* **WALL** *I ENCOUNTERED LAST TIME--THE WAY INTO DAVID'S MIND IS COMPLETELY CLEAR!*
*WHATEVER YOU SAY-- HEY,* **LOOK!**
*IT'S* **RAHNE**-- *SHE FOUND US!*

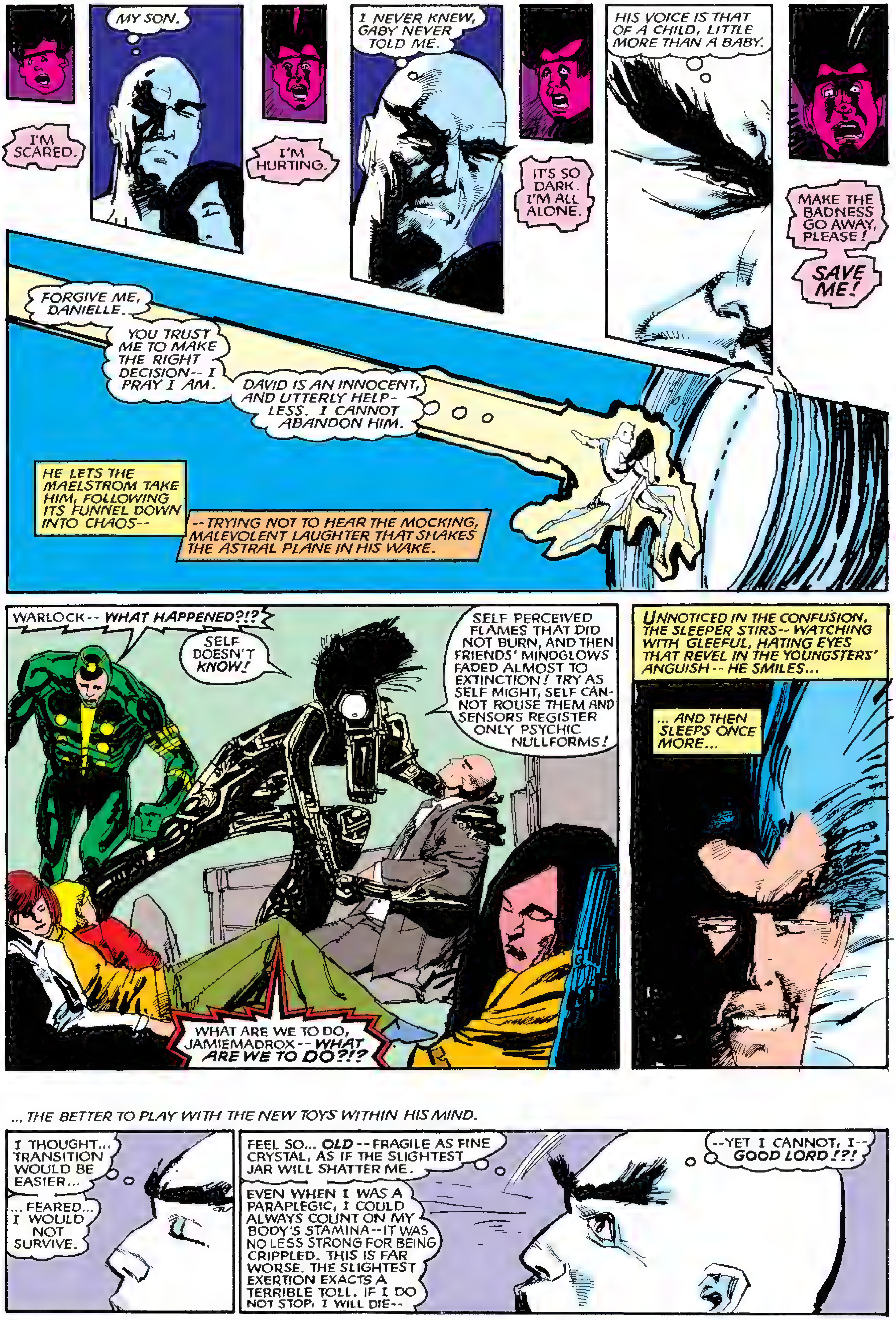

DANI, DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE-- IT'S A TRAP!
YAIOWWW!
AS YOU YOURSELF SURMISED-- =WHOUNFF!= WOLFSBANE SHOULD BE FROZEN IN HER TRANSITIONAL FORM.
MY PSYCHIC STRENGTH IS A SHADOW OF ITS NORMAL SELF-- BUT I MUST PREVAIL!
PROFESSOR, THE WOLF'S TURNED TO FLAME!
I'M BURNING!!
AT THAT SAME MOMENT, IN MOIRA'S LAB...
ALARM!
VISUAL SENSORS INDICATE SUDDEN MANIFESTATION OF FIRE-- YET SELF PERCEIVES ANOMALY! EPIDERMAL TISSUE OF PROFESSOR AND DANI SEEMS UNAFFECTED.
THIS IS CRAZY! THEY'RE SURROUNDED BY REAL FLAMES-- I CAN FEEL THE HEAT-- BUT NEITHER OF THEM ARE BURNING!
CRIPES-- NOW IT'S HAPPENING TO US?!
THOSE WORDS ARE DOUG RAMSEY'S LAST, AS HE AND GABY HALLER CRUMPLE TO THE FLOOR-- ALONG WITH XAVIER AND DANI.
FRIEND DOUG-- NO!!!
ONLY WARLOCK--THANKS TO HIS TOTALLY ALIEN NATURE-- IS SPARED THIS SUDDEN, RUTHLESS, PSIONIC ONSLAUGHT, THOUGH THE SHOCK OF SEEING HIS COMPANIONS AND MENTOR STRUCK DOWN IS ALMOST MORE THAN HE CAN BEAR.
AND THROUGH IT ALL, DAVID REMAINS ASLEEP, A BLISSFULLY INNOCENT SMILE ON HIS FACE.

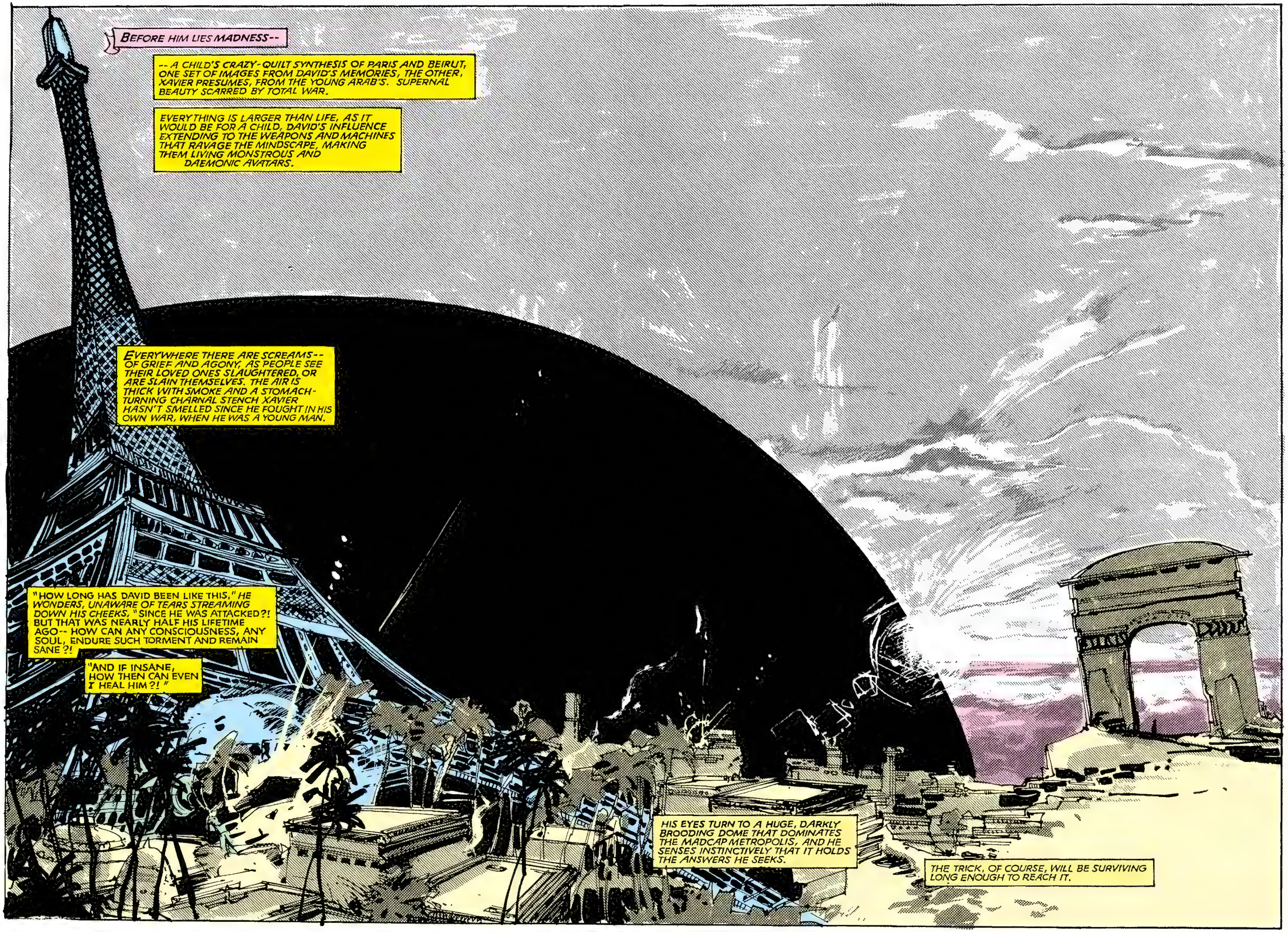

MEANWHILE...
DANI FAINTED. SMALL WONDER--SHE BELIEVED SHE WAS BURNING TO DEATH.
FORTUNATELY, ALL THE FACETS OF EXISTENCE IN THIS ASTRAL ENVIRONMENT ARE MUTABLE. THE FORCE OF MY OWN WILL WAS SUFFICIENT TO DOUSE THE PSYCHIC FLAMES AND HEAL OUR INJURIES. I MUST HUSBAND MY RESOURCES, HOWEVER.
I LACK THE STRENGTH TO PULL THAT STUNT AGAIN -- eh, WHAT'S THIS?!
THE "GROUND" -- VANISHING BENEATH ME -- DOUGLAS AND GABRIELLE, THEIR ASTRAL SELVES ARE BEING SWEPT INTO THE MAELSTROM!
I'M A **FOOL**-- CAUGHT THEM --
-- MY WEAKNESS HAS DULLED...
... THE FEW WITS I STILL POSSESS!
I SHOULD HAVE MADE SURE THOSE LEFT BEHIND WERE PROTECTED. MY CARELESS LACK OF FORESIGHT MAY HAVE DOOMED US ALL!
THE WALL -- CLOSING IN!!
NO!
I'LL NOT ALLOW IT!!
IF YOU CAN HEAR MY THOUGHTS, DAVID, I'VE NO WISH TO DO YOU HARM -- BUT NEITHER WILL I PERMIT YOU TO ABDUCT AND IMPRISON US!
ANYBODY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
IN DREAMS -- THAT I MADE NIGHTMARES -- I SAW CHARLES AT SUCH A WALL, WITHIN MY OWN MIND, TEARING IT DOWN TO SET ME FREE.
I HATED THE CAGE I'D BUILT AROUND MYSELF -- YET I KNEW AS WELL THAT INSIDE I WAS SAFE. ONLY IF I WAS FREE COULD I BE HURT.
AND I WAS RIGHT.
GABY'S THOUGHTS -- CAN'T BLOCK THEM OUT -- TEARING AT ME LIKE KNIVES!
BUT I MUST IGNORE THEM -- DENY THEM -- FOR NOW!
YOUR RAW POWER MAKES YOU A MOST FORMIDABLE ADVERSARY, LAD...

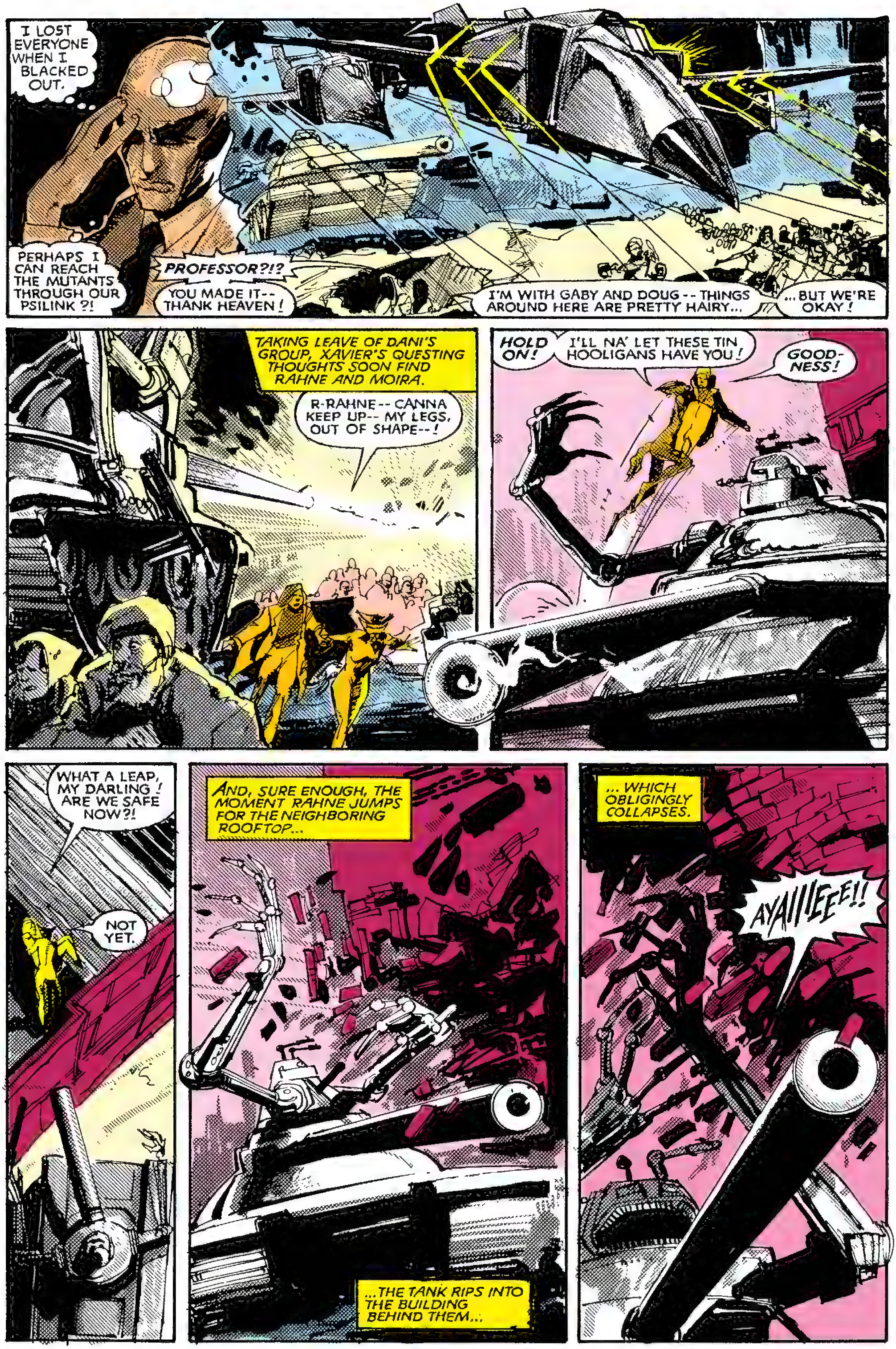

...BUT MINE IS TEMPERED BY SKILL AND EXPERIENCE.
YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR IT.
DANI-- WAKE UP, CHIEF! YOU'RE MISSING ALL THE FUN!
WHOZZAT?
DON' HIT, DOUGIE-- LEMME PULL... SELF TOGETHER...
I THINK THE PROF'S WINNING! I THINK WE'RE GONNA GET OUTTA THIS OKAY
BLESSED ARE THE IGNORANT-- DOUGLAS KNOWS TOO LITTLE TO BE FRIGHTENED. HE SIMPLY ACCEPTS THIS AS ANOTHER GRAND ADVENTURE AND ASSUMES IT WILL TURN OUT AS HAPPILY AS THE REST. I'M FLATTERED BY HIS FAITH IN ME.
I'M HOLDING MY OWN AGAINST THE WALL. PERHAPS, WHILE I'VE THIS OPPORTUNITY, I CAN LOCATE MOIRA AND THE OTHERS.
LOGICALLY, THEY SHOULD BE AT THE BASE OF THE MAELSTROM.
THERE-- INCREDIBLE! CAN SUCH A THING BE POSSIBLE?! A CITY?!!
PROFESSOR, I CAN "HEAR" RAHNE!
SHE'S DOWN BELOW-- Dr. MacTAGGERT'S WITH HER!
THEY'RE IN TERRIBLE DANGER!!
IT SHOULD NOT BE LIKE THIS, A SLEDGE-HAMMER ASSAULT ON THE CHILD'S PSYCHE.
DAVID HAS DONE NOTHING, HE IS AN INNOCENT!
YET I MUST STRIKE AT HIM AS I WOULD THE DEADLIEST SUPER-VILLAIN.
THE WALL CRACKS, BEGINS TO SPLIT ASUNDER, AND THEN...

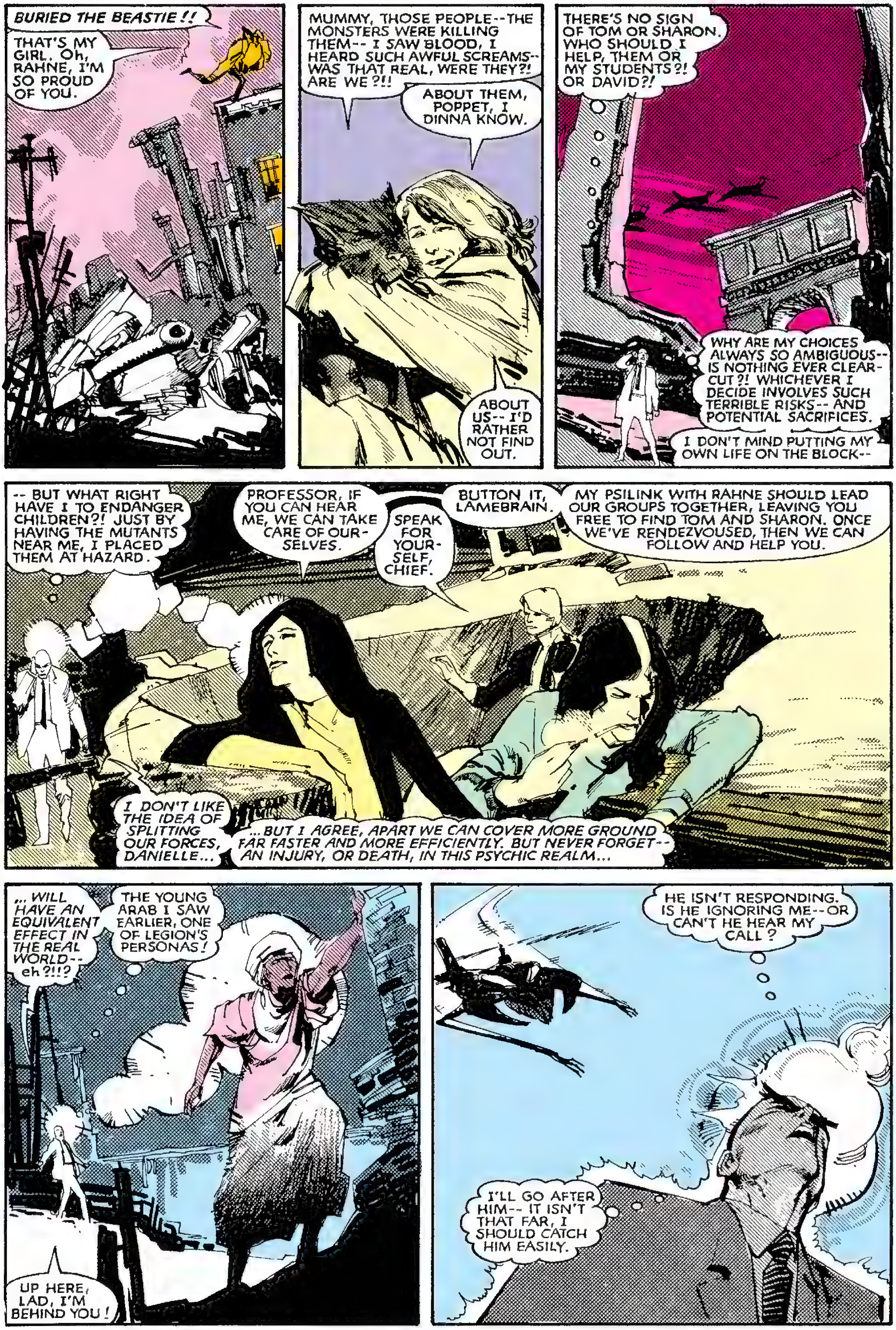

A SCREAM-- TORN FROM THE BOY'S SOUL!
BUT I DARE NOT STOP. I'LL BE TOO WEAK FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT-- AND HEAVEN KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE MEANTIME.
IF THE PSIONIC SELVES OF HIS CAPTIVES ARE SLAIN WITHIN HIS MIND, THEY'LL DIE IN REALITY AS WELL!
A FACE...
...FORMING IN THE WALL--
--DAVID, AS A YOUNG BOY!
MOTHER--
--WHY ARE YOU HURTING ME?!
HE'S CALLING TO GABY. HE'S IN AGONY! I'M SORRY, TRULY, DAVID, I WOULD STOP IF I COULD.
NOMOREHURTINGPLEASE-- MAKE THE BADNESS GOAWAY! HELPMESAVEME--
--FATHER!
ME?!?
HE'S YELLING AT ME, HE MEANS ME!
THIS IS GABY'S SECRET, THE BOY SEES IT IN HER THOUGHTS AND I IN HIS!
DAVID HALLER IS MY SON!
THERE'S ONLY A MOMENTARY LAPSE IN XAVIER'S CONCENTRATION-- AS HE'S STAGGERED BY THIS REVELATION AND ALL ITS MYRIAD IMPLICATIONS-- BUT IT PROVES FATAL.
HIS PROTECTIVE ENERGY BUBBLE POPS AND HE BARELY MANAGES TO CATCH HOLD OF DANI BEFORE SHE AND THE OTHERS ARE SWEPT INTO THE ABYSS.
HE STRAINS WITH ALL HIS MIGHT TO PULL THEM TO SAFETY-- AGAINST A WIND THAT PUTS THE MOST TERRIBLE OF HURRICANES TO SHAME--

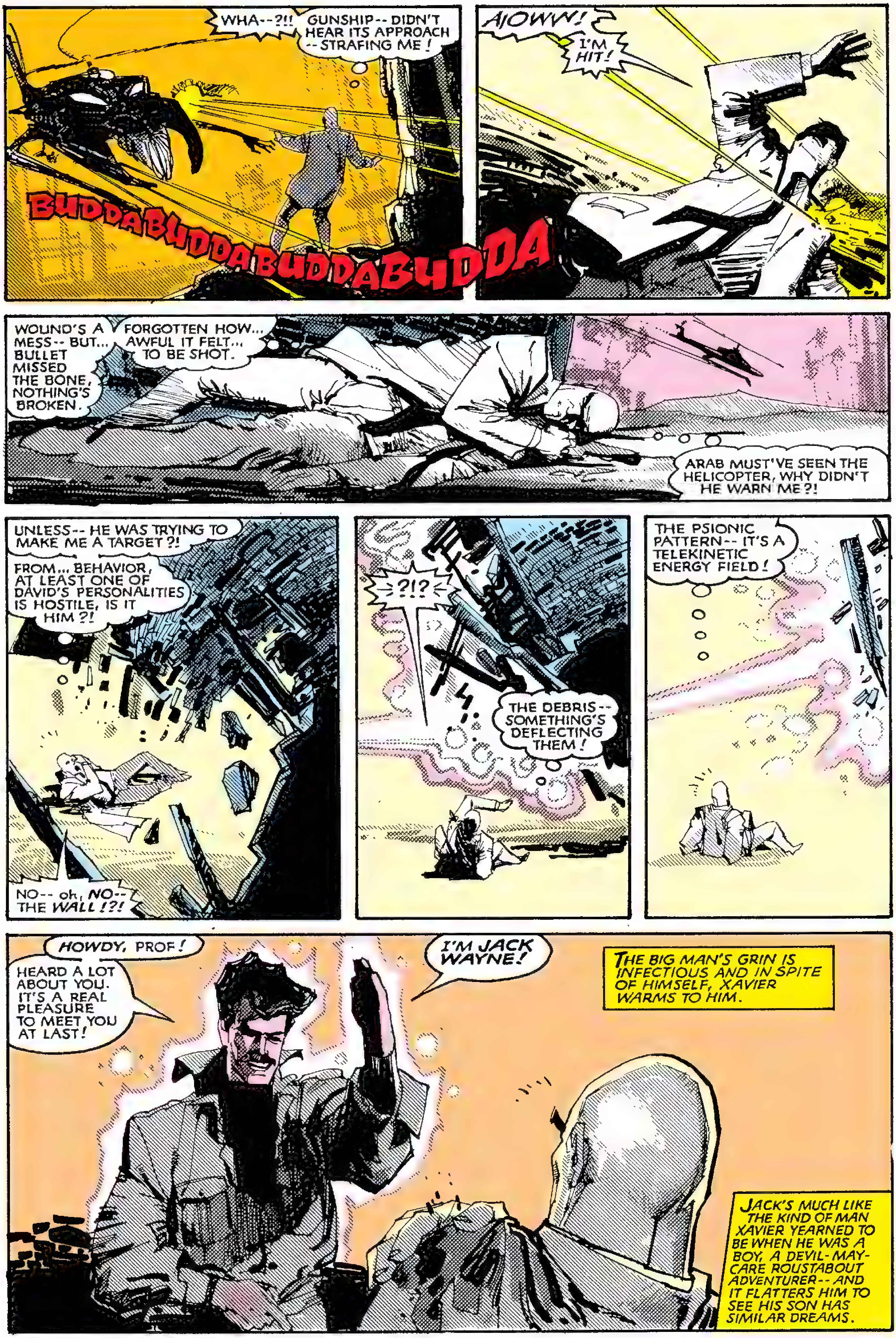

--TO NO AVAIL.
THE WALL IS CLOSING!
THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO ESCAPE WITH DANI-- BUT IF I DO, I'VE NO GUARANTEE I'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN. EVEN IF I CAN SHATTER THE BARRIER ONCE AND FOR ALL, WHO KNOWS WHAT EFFECT THAT WILL HAVE ON THE BOY, OR THE PSYCHES TRAPPED WITHIN HIS MIND?!
IF I STAY, I'VE NO BETTER CHANCE OF SUCCESS. IT'S NOT MERELY MY FATE AT STAKE, EITHER, I'VE DANI TO CONSIDER. HURLING HER ALONE THROUGH THE OPENING WON'T SAVE HER. IT WAS MY POWER THAT BROUGHT HER TO THE ASTRAL PLANE.
ONLY *I* CAN RESTORE HER TO HER BODY.
THEM'S THE BREAKS, PARDNER. COMES WITH THE TERRITORY.
< BEWARE, EFFENDI, **BEWARE!** YOUR LIVES-- AND THE BOY'S-- ARE IN DEADLY DANGER. MERCIFUL ALLAH, THEY HEAR BUT DO NOT UNDERSTAND! >
WHO **CARES?!** IT'S BETTER THIS WAY, Y'KNOW? KIND'A LAME, SEEIN' THE SAME FACES ALLA TIME-- BE GOOD T' BRING IN SOME NEW BLOOD TO PLAY WITH.
WHO **ARE** YOU?!
YOU GOT THE EDUCATION, PROF, YOU TELL US. WE ARE MANY...
...SO CALL US, **LEGION!**
MOMMA, POPPA--
--HELP ME!

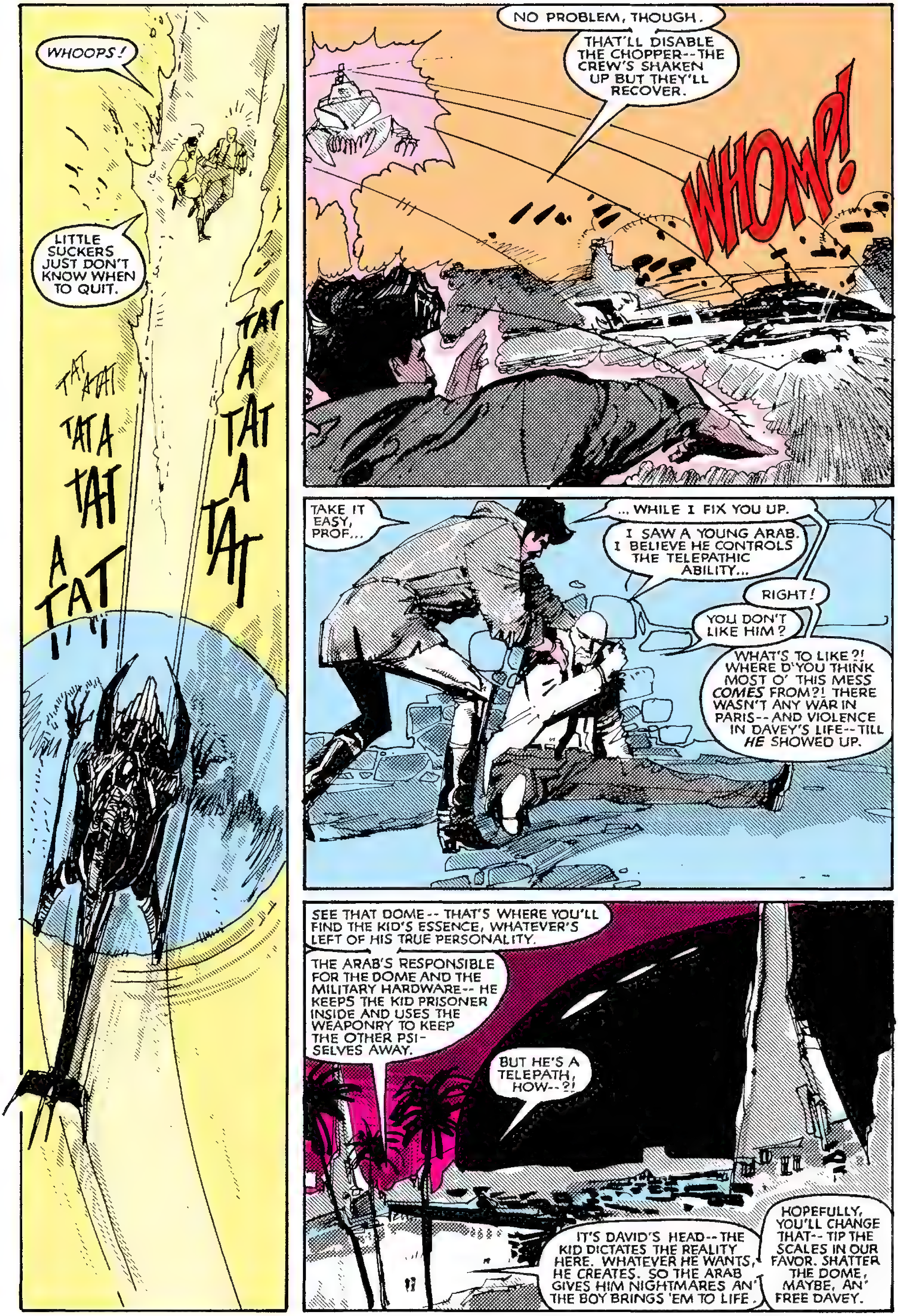

I'M SCARED.
MY SON.
I'M HURTING.
I NEVER KNEW, GABY NEVER TOLD ME.
IT'S SO DARK. I'M ALL ALONE.
HIS VOICE IS THAT OF A CHILD, LITTLE MORE THAN A BABY.
MAKE THE BADNESS GO AWAY, PLEASE!
SAVE ME!
FORGIVE ME, DANIELLE.
YOU TRUST ME TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION-- I PRAY I AM.
DAVID IS AN INNOCENT, AND UTTERLY HELPLESS. I CANNOT ABANDON HIM.
HE LETS THE MAELSTROM TAKE HIM, FOLLOWING ITS FUNNEL DOWN INTO CHAOS--
--TRYING NOT TO HEAR THE MOCKING, MALEVOLENT LAUGHTER THAT SHAKES THE ASTRAL PLANE IN HIS WAKE.
WARLOCK-- WHAT HAPPENED?!?
SELF DOESN'T KNOW!
SELF PERCEIVED FLAMES THAT DID NOT BURN, AND THEN FRIENDS' MINDGLOWS FADED ALMOST TO EXTINCTION! TRY AS SELF MIGHT, SELF CANNOT ROUSE THEM AND SENSORS REGISTER ONLY PSYCHIC NULLFORMS!
WHAT ARE WE TO DO, JAMIEMADROX-- WHAT ARE WE TO DO?!?
UNNOTICED IN THE CONFUSION, THE SLEEPER STIRS-- WATCHING WITH GLEEFUL, HATING EYES THAT REVEL IN THE YOUNGSTERS' ANGUISH-- HE SMILES...
...AND THEN SLEEPS ONCE MORE...
...THE BETTER TO PLAY WITH THE NEW TOYS WITHIN HIS MIND.
I THOUGHT... TRANSITION WOULD BE EASIER...
...FEARED... I WOULD NOT SURVIVE.
FEEL SO... OLD-- FRAGILE AS FINE CRYSTAL, AS IF THE SLIGHTEST JAR WILL SHATTER ME.
EVEN WHEN I WAS A PARAPLEGIC, I COULD ALWAYS COUNT ON MY BODY'S STAMINA-- IT WAS NO LESS STRONG FOR BEING CRIPPLED. THIS IS FAR WORSE. THE SLIGHTEST EXERTION EXACTS A TERRIBLE TOLL. IF I DO NOT STOP, I WILL DIE--
--YET I CANNOT, I-- GOOD LORD!?!

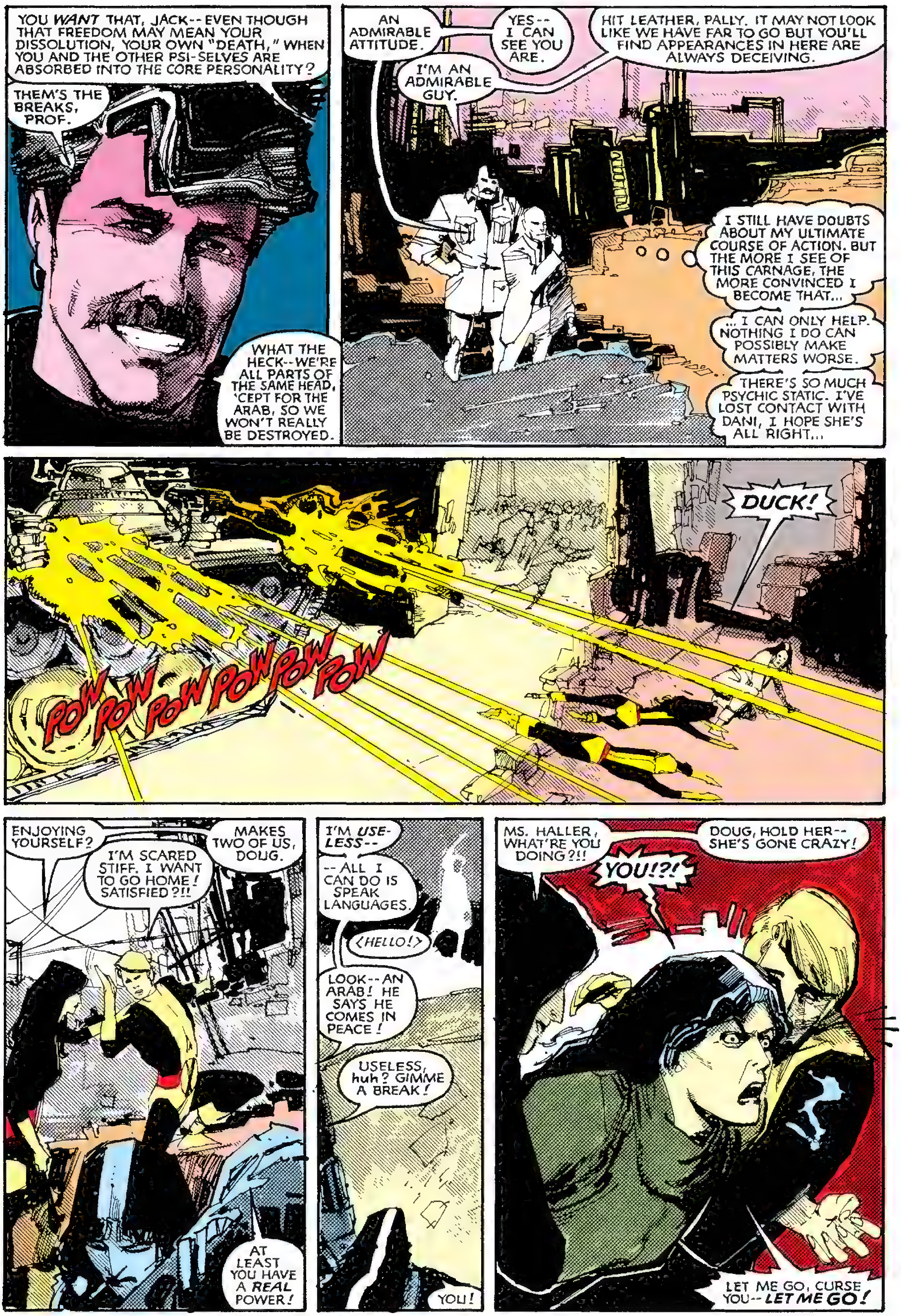

BEFORE HIM LIES MADNESS--
-- A CHILD'S CRAZY-QUILT SYNTHESIS OF PARIS AND BEIRUT, ONE SET OF IMAGES FROM DAVID'S MEMORIES, THE OTHER, XAVIER PRESUMES, FROM THE YOUNG ARAB'S. SUPERNAL BEAUTY SCARRED BY TOTAL WAR.
EVERYTHING IS LARGER THAN LIFE, AS IT WOULD BE FOR A CHILD, DAVID'S INFLUENCE EXTENDING TO THE WEAPONS AND MACHINES THAT RAVAGE THE MINDSCAPE, MAKING THEM LIVING MONSTROUS AND DAEMONIC AVATARS.
EVERYWHERE THERE ARE SCREAMS-- OF GRIEF AND AGONY, AS PEOPLE SEE THEIR LOVED ONES SLAUGHTERED, OR ARE SLAIN THEMSELVES. THE AIR IS THICK WITH SMOKE AND A STOMACH-TURNING CHARNAL STENCH XAVIER HASN'T SMELLED SINCE HE FOUGHT IN HIS OWN WAR, WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG MAN.
"HOW LONG HAS DAVID BEEN LIKE THIS," HE WONDERS, UNAWARE OF TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS CHEEKS, "SINCE HE WAS ATTACKED?! BUT THAT WAS NEARLY HALF HIS LIFETIME AGO-- HOW CAN ANY CONSCIOUSNESS, ANY SOUL, ENDURE SUCH TORMENT AND REMAIN SANE?!
"AND IF INSANE, HOW THEN CAN EVEN I HEAL HIM?!"
HIS EYES TURN TO A HUGE, DARKLY BROODING DOME THAT DOMINATES THE MADCAP METROPOLIS, AND HE SENSES INSTINCTIVELY THAT IT HOLDS THE ANSWERS HE SEEKS.
THE TRICK, OF COURSE, WILL BE SURVIVING LONG ENOUGH TO REACH IT.

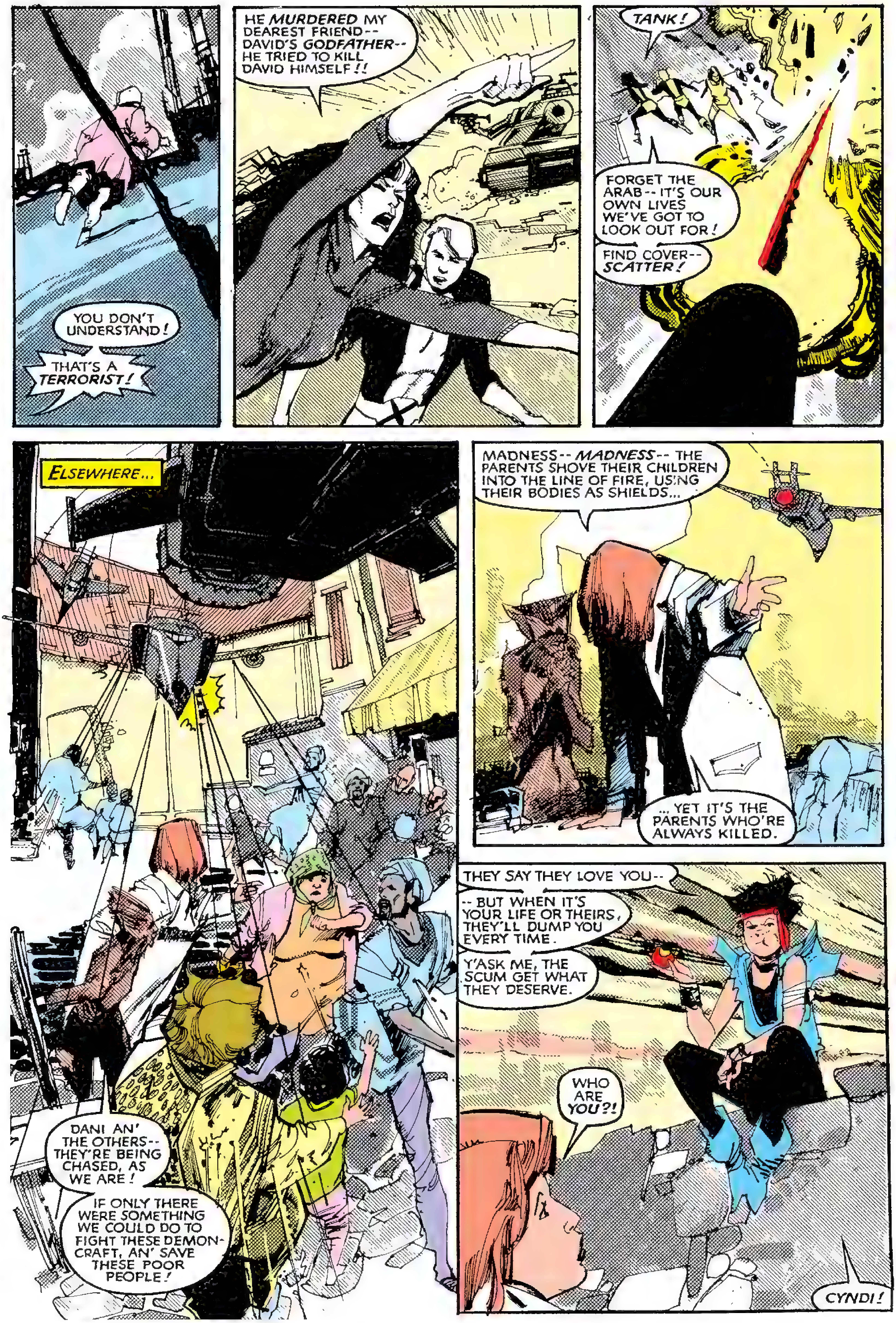

I LOST EVERYONE WHEN I BLACKED OUT.
PERHAPS I CAN REACH THE MUTANTS THROUGH OUR PSILINK ?!
PROFESSOR?!?
YOU MADE IT-- THANK HEAVEN!
I'M WITH GABY AND DOUG -- THINGS AROUND HERE ARE PRETTY HAIRY...
...BUT WE'RE OKAY!
TAKING LEAVE OF DANI'S GROUP, XAVIER'S QUESTING THOUGHTS SOON FIND RAHNE AND MOIRA.
R-RAHNE-- CANNA KEEP UP-- MY LEGS, OUT OF SHAPE--!
HOLD ON!
I'LL NA' LET THESE TIN HOOLIGANS HAVE YOU!
GOODNESS!
WHAT A LEAP, MY DARLING! ARE WE SAFE NOW?!
NOT YET.
AND, SURE ENOUGH, THE MOMENT RAHNE JUMPS FOR THE NEIGHBORING ROOFTOP...
...THE TANK RIPS INTO THE BUILDING BEHIND THEM...
...WHICH OBLIGINGLY COLLAPSES.
AYAIIIEEE!!

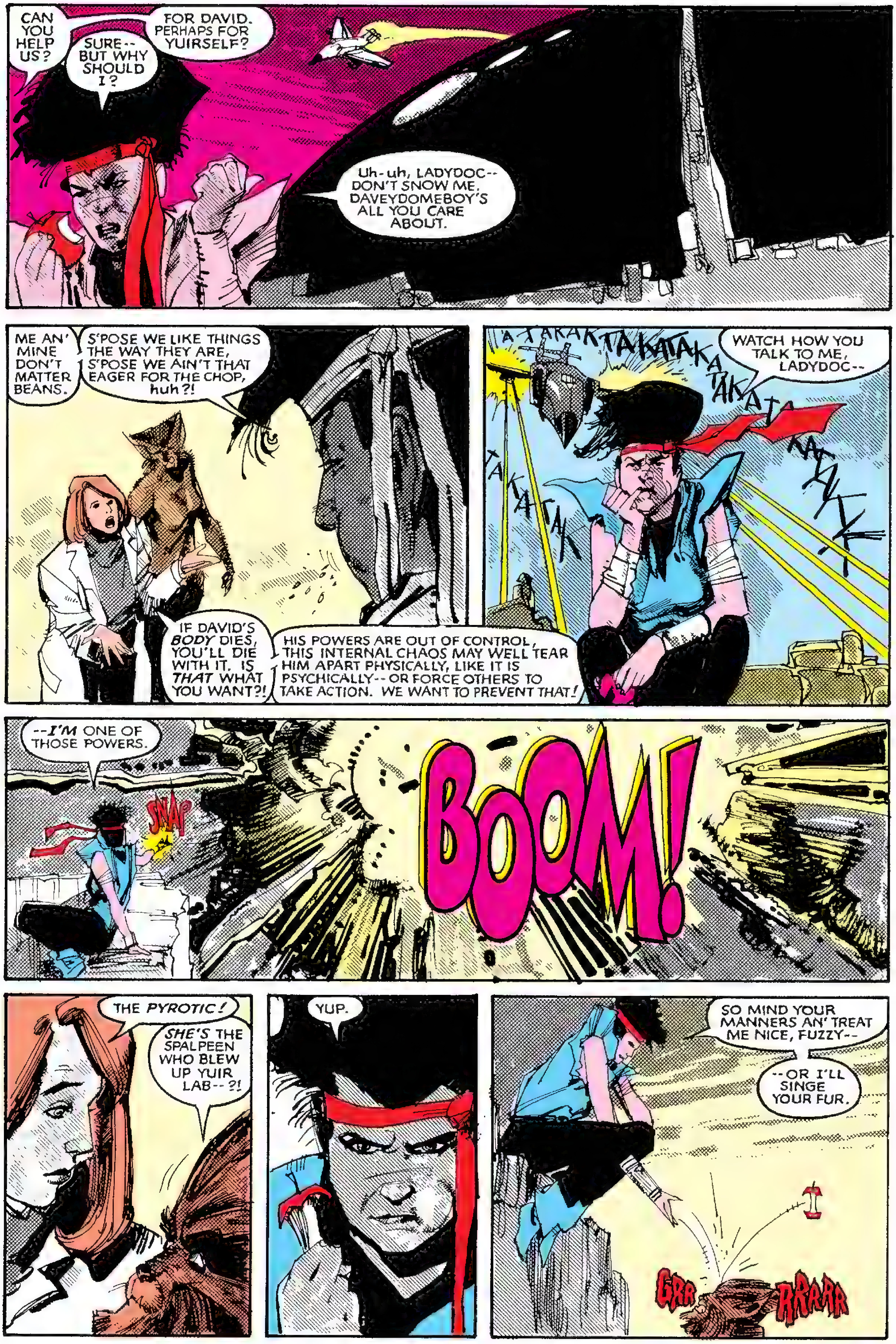

*BURIED THE BEASTIE !!*
THAT'S MY GIRL. Oh, RAHNE, I'M SO PROUD OF YOU.
MUMMY, THOSE PEOPLE--THE MONSTERS WERE KILLING THEM-- I SAW BLOOD, I HEARD SUCH AWFUL SCREAMS--WAS THAT REAL, WERE THEY?! ARE WE ?!!
ABOUT THEM, POPPET, I DINNA KNOW.
ABOUT US-- I'D RATHER NOT FIND OUT.
THERE'S NO SIGN OF TOM OR SHARON. WHO SHOULD I HELP, THEM OR MY STUDENTS?! OR DAVID?!
WHY ARE MY CHOICES ALWAYS SO AMBIGUOUS-- IS NOTHING EVER CLEAR-CUT?! WHICHEVER I DECIDE INVOLVES SUCH TERRIBLE RISKS-- AND POTENTIAL SACRIFICES.
I DON'T MIND PUTTING MY OWN LIFE ON THE BLOCK--
-- BUT WHAT RIGHT HAVE I TO ENDANGER CHILDREN?! JUST BY HAVING THE MUTANTS NEAR ME, I PLACED THEM AT HAZARD.
PROFESSOR, IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, WE CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES.
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, CHIEF.
BUTTON IT, LAMEBRAIN.
MY PSILINK WITH RAHNE SHOULD LEAD OUR GROUPS TOGETHER, LEAVING YOU FREE TO FIND TOM AND SHARON. ONCE WE'VE RENDEZVOUSED, THEN WE CAN FOLLOW AND HELP YOU.
*I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF SPLITTING OUR FORCES, DANIELLE...*
*...BUT I AGREE, APART WE CAN COVER MORE GROUND FAR FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY. BUT NEVER FORGET-- AN INJURY, OR DEATH, IN THIS PSYCHIC REALM...*
*...WILL HAVE AN EQUIVALENT EFFECT IN THE REAL WORLD--* eh?!!?
THE YOUNG ARAB I SAW EARLIER, ONE OF LEGION'S PERSONAS!
UP HERE, LAD, I'M BEHIND YOU!
HE ISN'T RESPONDING. IS HE IGNORING ME--OR CAN'T HE HEAR MY CALL?
I'LL GO AFTER HIM-- IT ISN'T THAT FAR, I SHOULD CATCH HIM EASILY.

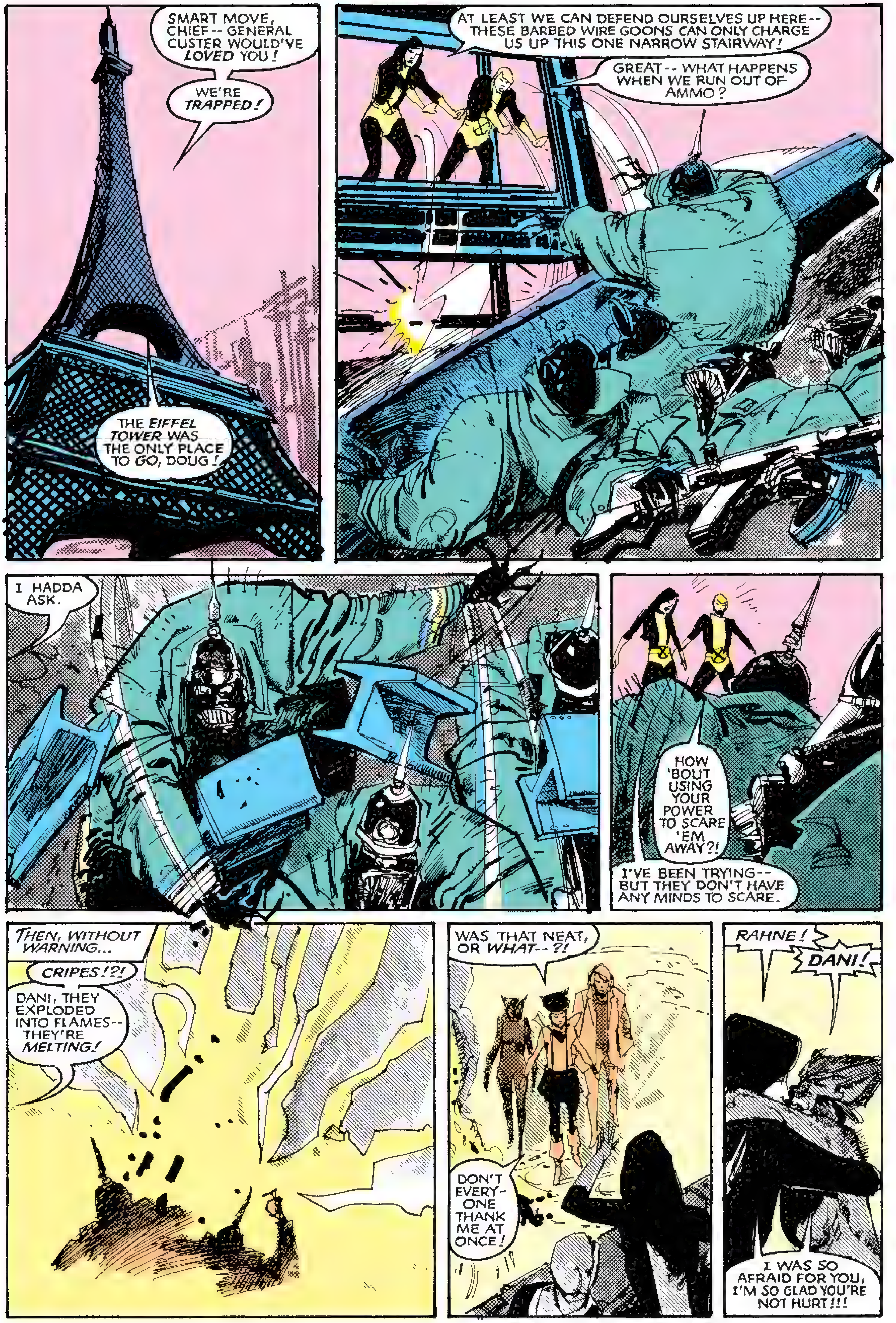

WHA--?!!
GUNSHIP-- DIDN'T HEAR ITS APPROACH --STRAFING ME!
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA
AIOWW!
I'M HIT!
WOUND'S A MESS-- BUT... BULLET MISSED THE BONE, NOTHING'S BROKEN.
FORGOTTEN HOW... AWFUL IT FELT... TO BE SHOT.
ARAB MUST'VE SEEN THE HELICOPTER, WHY DIDN'T HE WARN ME?!
UNLESS-- HE WAS TRYING TO MAKE ME A TARGET?!
FROM... BEHAVIOR, AT LEAST ONE OF DAVID'S PERSONALITIES IS HOSTILE, IS IT HIM?!
NO-- oh, NO-- THE WALL!?!
?!?
THE DEBRIS-- SOMETHING'S DEFLECTING THEM!
THE PSIONIC PATTERN-- IT'S A TELEKINETIC ENERGY FIELD!
HOWDY, PROF!
HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU. IT'S A REAL PLEASURE TO MEET YOU AT LAST!
I'M JACK WAYNE!
THE BIG MAN'S GRIN IS INFECTIOUS AND IN SPITE OF HIMSELF, XAVIER WARMS TO HIM.
JACK'S MUCH LIKE THE KIND OF MAN XAVIER YEARNED TO BE WHEN HE WAS A BOY, A DEVIL-MAY-CARE ROUSTABOUT ADVENTURER-- AND IT FLATTERS HIM TO SEE HIS SON HAS SIMILAR DREAMS.

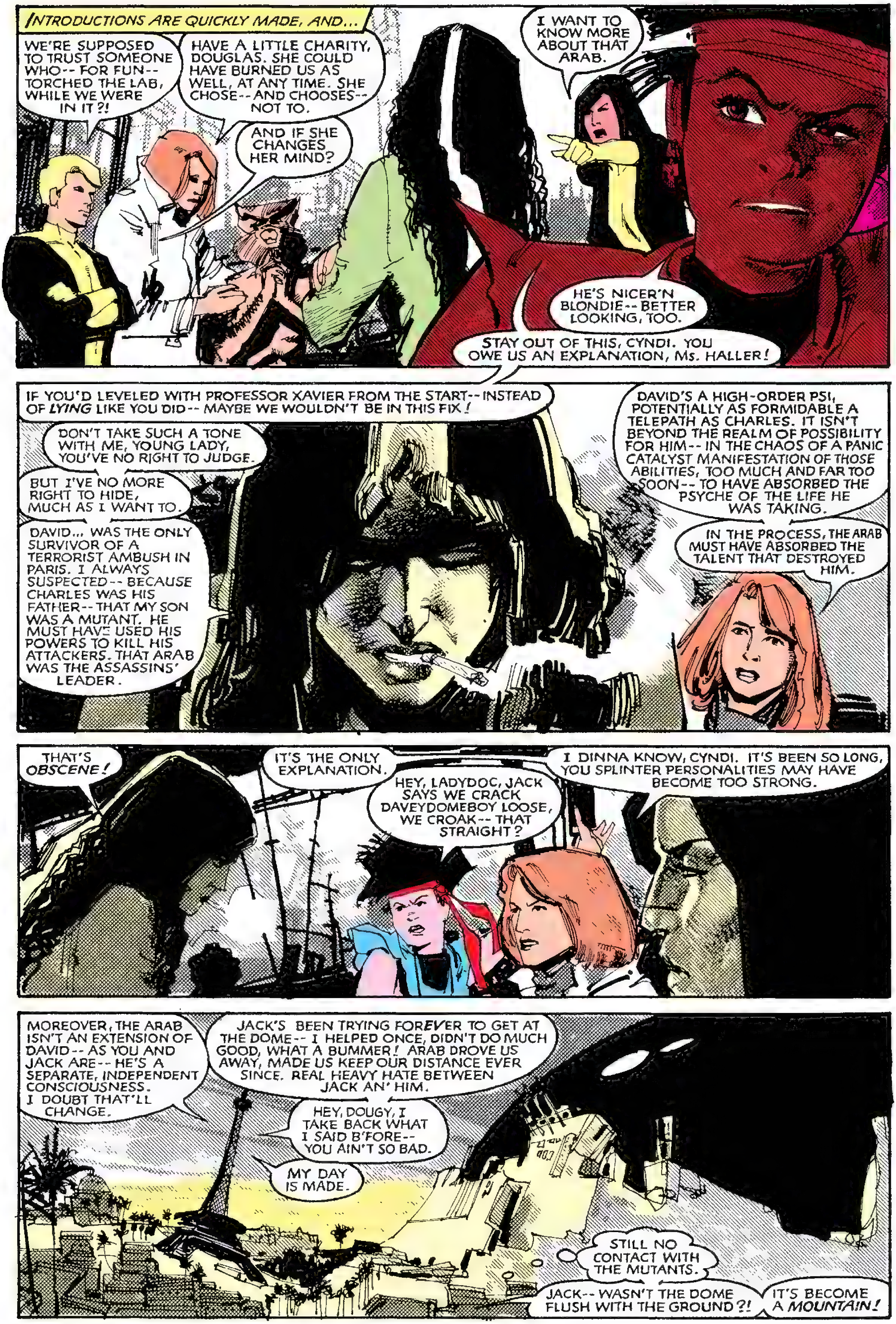

WHOOPS!
LITTLE SUCKERS JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN TO QUIT.
TAT A TAT TAT A TAT A TAT
TAT A TAT A TAT
NO PROBLEM, THOUGH.
THAT'LL DISABLE THE CHOPPER--THE CREW'S SHAKEN UP BUT THEY'LL RECOVER.
WHOMP!
TAKE IT EASY, PROF...
...WHILE I FIX YOU UP.
I SAW A YOUNG ARAB. I BELIEVE HE CONTROLS THE TELEPATHIC ABILITY...
RIGHT!
YOU DON'T LIKE HIM?
WHAT'S TO LIKE?! WHERE D'YOU THINK MOST O' THIS MESS COMES FROM?! THERE WASN'T ANY WAR IN PARIS--AND VIOLENCE IN DAVEY'S LIFE--TILL HE SHOWED UP.
SEE THAT DOME-- THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL FIND THE KID'S ESSENCE, WHATEVER'S LEFT OF HIS TRUE PERSONALITY.
THE ARAB'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOME AND THE MILITARY HARDWARE-- HE KEEPS THE KID PRISONER INSIDE AND USES THE WEAPONRY TO KEEP THE OTHER PSI-SELVES AWAY.
BUT HE'S A TELEPATH, HOW--?!
IT'S DAVID'S HEAD--THE KID DICTATES THE REALITY HERE. WHATEVER HE WANTS, HE CREATES. SO THE ARAB GIVES HIM NIGHTMARES AN' THE BOY BRINGS 'EM TO LIFE.
HOPEFULLY, YOU'LL CHANGE THAT-- TIP THE SCALES IN OUR FAVOR. SHATTER THE DOME, MAYBE, AN' FREE DAVEY.

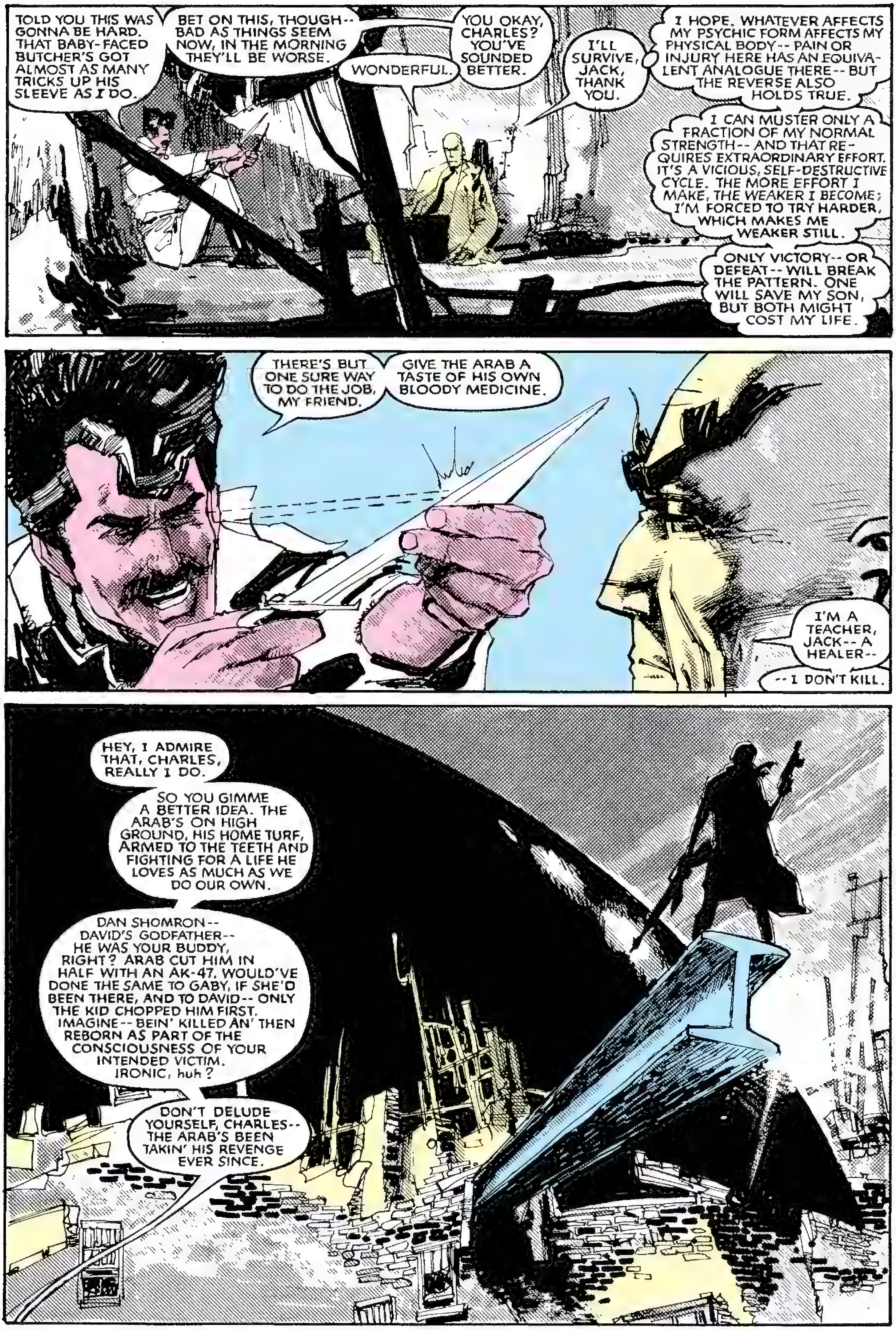

YOU *WANT* THAT, JACK-- EVEN THOUGH THAT FREEDOM MAY MEAN YOUR DISSOLUTION, YOUR OWN "DEATH," WHEN YOU AND THE OTHER PSI-SELVES ARE ABSORBED INTO THE CORE PERSONALITY?
THEM'S THE BREAKS, PROF.
WHAT THE HECK--WE'RE ALL PARTS OF THE SAME HEAD, 'CEPT FOR THE ARAB, SO WE WON'T REALLY BE DESTROYED.
AN ADMIRABLE ATTITUDE.
YES-- I CAN SEE YOU ARE.
I'M AN ADMIRABLE GUY.
HIT LEATHER, PALLY. IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE WE HAVE FAR TO GO BUT YOU'LL FIND APPEARANCES IN HERE ARE ALWAYS DECEIVING.
I STILL HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT MY ULTIMATE COURSE OF ACTION. BUT THE MORE I SEE OF THIS CARNAGE, THE MORE CONVINCED I BECOME THAT...
...I CAN ONLY HELP. NOTHING I DO CAN POSSIBLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE.
THERE'S SO MUCH PSYCHIC STATIC. I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH DANI. I HOPE SHE'S ALL RIGHT...
DUCK!
POW POW POW POW POW POW
ENJOYING YOURSELF?
I'M SCARED STIFF. I WANT TO GO HOME! SATISFIED?!!
MAKES TWO OF US, DOUG.
AT LEAST YOU HAVE A *REAL* POWER!
I'M *USELESS*--
--ALL I CAN DO IS SPEAK LANGUAGES.
<HELLO!>
LOOK--AN ARAB! HE SAYS HE COMES IN PEACE!
USELESS, huh? GIMME A BREAK!
YOU!
MS. HALLER, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!!
DOUG, HOLD HER-- SHE'S GONE CRAZY!
YOU!?!
LET ME GO, CURSE YOU-- *LET ME GO!*

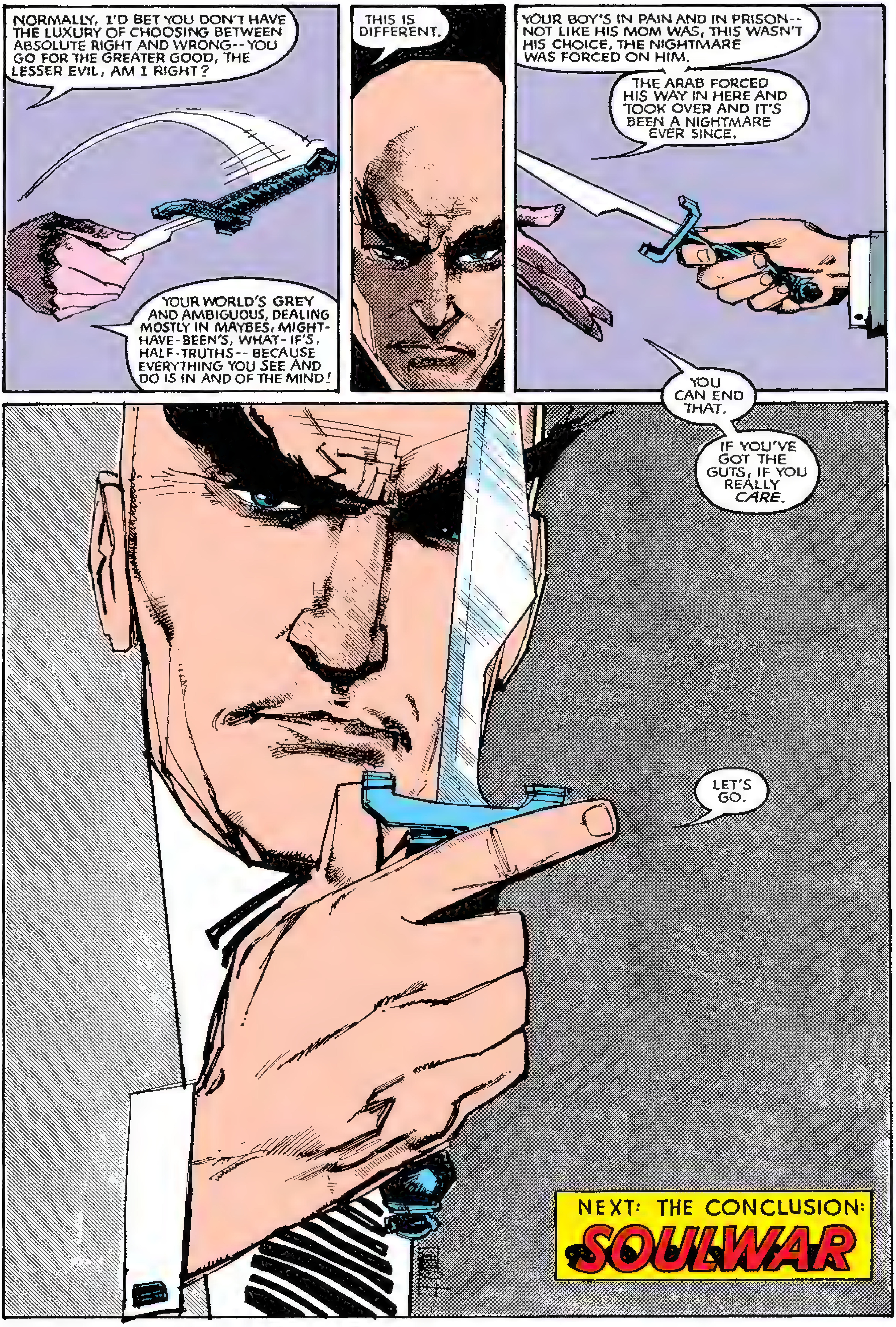

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
THAT'S A TERRORIST!
HE MURDERED MY DEAREST FRIEND-- DAVID'S GODFATHER-- HE TRIED TO KILL DAVID HIMSELF!!
TANK!
FORGET THE ARAB-- IT'S OUR OWN LIVES WE'VE GOT TO LOOK OUT FOR!
FIND COVER-- SCATTER!
ELSEWHERE...
DANI AN' THE OTHERS-- THEY'RE BEING CHASED, AS WE ARE!
IF ONLY THERE WERE SOMETHING WE COULD DO TO FIGHT THESE DEMON-CRAFT, AN' SAVE THESE POOR PEOPLE!
MADNESS-- MADNESS-- THE PARENTS SHOVE THEIR CHILDREN INTO THE LINE OF FIRE, USING THEIR BODIES AS SHIELDS...
... YET IT'S THE PARENTS WHO'RE ALWAYS KILLED.
THEY SAY THEY LOVE YOU--
-- BUT WHEN IT'S YOUR LIFE OR THEIRS, THEY'LL DUMP YOU EVERY TIME.
Y'ASK ME, THE SCUM GET WHAT THEY DESERVE.
WHO ARE YOU?!
CYNDI!


CAN YOU HELP US?
SURE-- BUT WHY SHOULD I?
FOR DAVID. PERHAPS FOR YUIRSELF?
Uh-uh, LADYDOC-- DON'T SNOW ME. DAVEYDOMEBOY'S ALL YOU CARE ABOUT.
ME AN' MINE DON'T MATTER BEANS.
S'POSE WE LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE, S'POSE WE AIN'T THAT EAGER FOR THE CHOP, huh?!
IF DAVID'S *BODY* DIES, YOU'LL DIE WITH IT. IS *THAT* WHAT YOU WANT?!
HIS POWERS ARE OUT OF CONTROL, THIS INTERNAL CHAOS MAY WELL TEAR HIM APART PHYSICALLY, LIKE IT IS PSYCHICALLY-- OR FORCE OTHERS TO TAKE ACTION. WE WANT TO PREVENT *THAT!*
TAKAKTAKATAKATAKATAKATAKKK
TAKATAK
WATCH HOW YOU TALK TO ME, LADYDOC--
--*I'M* ONE OF THOSE POWERS.
SNAP
BOOM!
THE *PYROTIC!*
*SHE'S* THE SPALPEEN WHO BLEW UP YUIR LAB--?!
YUP.
SO MIND YOUR MANNERS AN' TREAT ME NICE, FUZZY--
--OR I'LL SINGE YOUR FUR.
GRR RRARR


SMART MOVE, CHIEF -- GENERAL CUSTER WOULD'VE *LOVED* YOU!
WE'RE *TRAPPED!*
THE *EIFFEL TOWER* WAS THE ONLY PLACE TO *GO*, DOUG!
AT LEAST WE CAN DEFEND OURSELVES UP HERE -- THESE BARBED WIRE GOONS CAN ONLY CHARGE US UP THIS ONE NARROW STAIRWAY!
GREAT -- WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RUN OUT OF AMMO?
I HADDA ASK.
HOW 'BOUT USING YOUR POWER TO SCARE 'EM AWAY?!
I'VE BEEN TRYING -- BUT THEY DON'T HAVE ANY MINDS TO SCARE.
*THEN, WITHOUT WARNING...*
*CRIPES!?!*
DANI, THEY EXPLODED INTO FLAMES -- THEY'RE *MELTING!*
WAS THAT NEAT, OR *WHAT*--?!
DON'T EVERYONE THANK ME AT ONCE!
*RAHNE!*
*DANI!*
I WAS SO AFRAID FOR YOU, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE NOT HURT!!!


INTRODUCTIONS ARE QUICKLY MADE, AND...
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TRUST SOMEONE WHO-- FOR FUN-- TORCHED THE LAB, WHILE WE WERE IN IT?!
HAVE A LITTLE CHARITY, DOUGLAS. SHE COULD HAVE BURNED US AS WELL, AT ANY TIME. SHE CHOSE-- AND CHOOSES-- NOT TO.
AND IF SHE CHANGES HER MIND?
I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT ARAB.
HE'S NICER'N BLONDIE-- BETTER LOOKING, TOO.
STAY OUT OF THIS, CYNDI. YOU OWE US AN EXPLANATION, Ms. HALLER!
IF YOU'D LEVELED WITH PROFESSOR XAVIER FROM THE START-- INSTEAD OF *LYING* LIKE YOU DID-- MAYBE WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS FIX!
DON'T TAKE SUCH A TONE WITH ME, YOUNG LADY, YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO JUDGE.
BUT I'VE NO MORE RIGHT TO HIDE, MUCH AS I WANT TO.
DAVID... WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF A TERRORIST AMBUSH IN PARIS. I ALWAYS SUSPECTED-- BECAUSE CHARLES WAS HIS FATHER-- THAT MY SON WAS A MUTANT. HE MUST HAVE USED HIS POWERS TO KILL HIS ATTACKERS. THAT ARAB WAS THE ASSASSINS' LEADER.
DAVID'S A HIGH-ORDER PSI, POTENTIALLY AS FORMIDABLE A TELEPATH AS CHARLES. IT ISN'T BEYOND THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY FOR HIM-- IN THE CHAOS OF A PANIC CATALYST MANIFESTATION OF THOSE ABILITIES, TOO MUCH AND FAR TOO SOON-- TO HAVE ABSORBED THE PSYCHE OF THE LIFE HE WAS TAKING.
IN THE PROCESS, THE ARAB MUST HAVE ABSORBED THE TALENT THAT DESTROYED HIM.
THAT'S *OBSCENE!*
IT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION.
HEY, LADYDOC, JACK SAYS WE CRACK DAVEYDOMEBOY LOOSE, WE CROAK-- THAT STRAIGHT?
I DINNA KNOW, CYNDI. IT'S BEEN SO LONG, YOU SPLINTER PERSONALITIES MAY HAVE BECOME TOO STRONG.
MOREOVER, THE ARAB ISN'T AN EXTENSION OF DAVID-- AS YOU AND JACK ARE-- HE'S A SEPARATE, INDEPENDENT CONSCIOUSNESS. I DOUBT THAT'LL CHANGE.
JACK'S BEEN TRYING FOR*EV*ER TO GET AT THE DOME-- I HELPED ONCE, DIDN'T DO MUCH GOOD, WHAT A BUMMER! ARAB DROVE US AWAY, MADE US KEEP OUR DISTANCE EVER SINCE. REAL HEAVY HATE BETWEEN JACK AN' HIM.
HEY, DOUGY, I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID B'FORE-- YOU AIN'T SO BAD.
MY DAY IS MADE.
STILL NO CONTACT WITH THE MUTANTS.
JACK-- WASN'T THE DOME FLUSH WITH THE GROUND?!
IT'S BECOME A *MOUNTAIN!*


TOLD YOU THIS WAS GONNA BE HARD. THAT BABY-FACED BUTCHER'S GOT ALMOST AS MANY TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE AS *I* DO.
BET ON THIS, THOUGH-- BAD AS THINGS SEEM NOW, IN THE MORNING THEY'LL BE WORSE.
WONDERFUL.
YOU OKAY, CHARLES? YOU'VE SOUNDED BETTER.
I'LL SURVIVE, JACK, THANK YOU.
I HOPE. WHATEVER AFFECTS MY PSYCHIC FORM AFFECTS MY PHYSICAL BODY-- PAIN OR INJURY HERE HAS AN EQUIVALENT ANALOGUE THERE-- BUT THE REVERSE ALSO HOLDS TRUE.
I CAN MUSTER ONLY A FRACTION OF MY NORMAL STRENGTH-- AND THAT REQUIRES EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT. IT'S A VICIOUS, SELF-DESTRUCTIVE CYCLE. THE MORE EFFORT I MAKE, THE WEAKER I BECOME; I'M FORCED TO TRY HARDER, WHICH MAKES ME WEAKER STILL.
ONLY VICTORY-- OR DEFEAT-- WILL BREAK THE PATTERN. ONE WILL SAVE MY SON, BUT BOTH MIGHT COST MY LIFE.
THERE'S BUT ONE SURE WAY TO DO THE JOB, MY FRIEND.
GIVE THE ARAB A TASTE OF HIS OWN BLOODY MEDICINE.
I'M A TEACHER, JACK-- A HEALER--
-- I DON'T KILL.
HEY, I ADMIRE THAT, CHARLES, REALLY I DO.
SO YOU GIMME A BETTER IDEA. THE ARAB'S ON HIGH GROUND, HIS HOME TURF, ARMED TO THE TEETH AND FIGHTING FOR A LIFE HE LOVES AS MUCH AS WE DO OUR OWN.
DAN SHOMRON-- DAVID'S GODFATHER-- HE WAS YOUR BUDDY, RIGHT? ARAB CUT HIM IN HALF WITH AN AK-47. WOULD'VE DONE THE SAME TO GABY, IF SHE'D BEEN THERE, AND TO DAVID-- ONLY THE KID CHOPPED HIM FIRST. IMAGINE-- BEIN' KILLED AN' THEN REBORN AS PART OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF YOUR INTENDED VICTIM. IRONIC, huh?
DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF, CHARLES-- THE ARAB'S BEEN TAKIN' HIS REVENGE EVER SINCE.


NORMALLY, I'D BET YOU DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF CHOOSING BETWEEN ABSOLUTE RIGHT AND WRONG-- YOU GO FOR THE GREATER GOOD, THE LESSER EVIL, AM I RIGHT?
YOUR WORLD'S GREY AND AMBIGUOUS, DEALING MOSTLY IN MAYBES, MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN'S, WHAT-IF'S, HALF-TRUTHS-- BECAUSE EVERYTHING YOU SEE AND DO IS IN AND OF THE MIND!
THIS IS DIFFERENT.
YOUR BOY'S IN PAIN AND IN PRISON-- NOT LIKE HIS MOM WAS, THIS WASN'T HIS CHOICE, THE NIGHTMARE WAS FORCED ON HIM.
THE ARAB FORCED HIS WAY IN HERE AND TOOK OVER AND IT'S BEEN A NIGHTMARE EVER SINCE.
YOU CAN END THAT.
IF YOU'VE GOT THE GUTS, IF YOU REALLY *CARE*.
LET'S GO.
NEXT: THE CONCLUSION:
SOULWAR

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THE · NEW
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**STAN LEE** *PRESENTS*

# SOULWAR

STARRING
*CHARLES XAVIER*
AND HIS
***NEW MUTANTS***

*THERE IS A PLACE, KNOWN TO US ALL, WHERE* ***ANYTHING*** *IS POSSIBLE, AND THE ONLY BOUNDARIES ARE THOSE OF IMAGINATION -- IT IS AS MUCH REALITY AS FANTASY, THE SOURCE OF WONDROUS DREAMS AND MOST HIDEOUS NIGHTMARES. IT DEFINES HOW WE VIEW THE WORLD AND WHAT WE DO WITH IT.*

*IT IS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE ARE AND WERE AND WILL EVER BE.*

*IT IS THE* ***BRAIN.***

*THIS ONE BELONGS TO A YOUNG MAN NAMED* ***DAVID CHARLES HALLER*** *AND IT IS A REALM WHERE* ***MADNESS*** *REIGNS.*

*SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE TWISTED, WAR-TORN MINDSCAPE THAT IS A CRAZY-QUILT HODGEPODGE BLEND OF PARIS AND BEIRUT ARE DAVID'S MOTHER, HIS DOCTOR AND THREE* ***NEW MUTANTS.***

*NEAR ITS HEART, STRUGGLING WITH DESPERATE DETERMINATION TO REACH IT AND, IF POSSIBLE, SAVE HIM FROM HIMSELF, IS* ***PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER*** *-- WHO IS MANY THINGS, INCLUDING THE MUTANTS' TEACHER AND MENTOR. BUT NOW, MOST OF ALL, DAVID'S* ***FATHER.***

***CHRIS CLAREMONT***
WRITER
***BILL SIENKIEWICZ***
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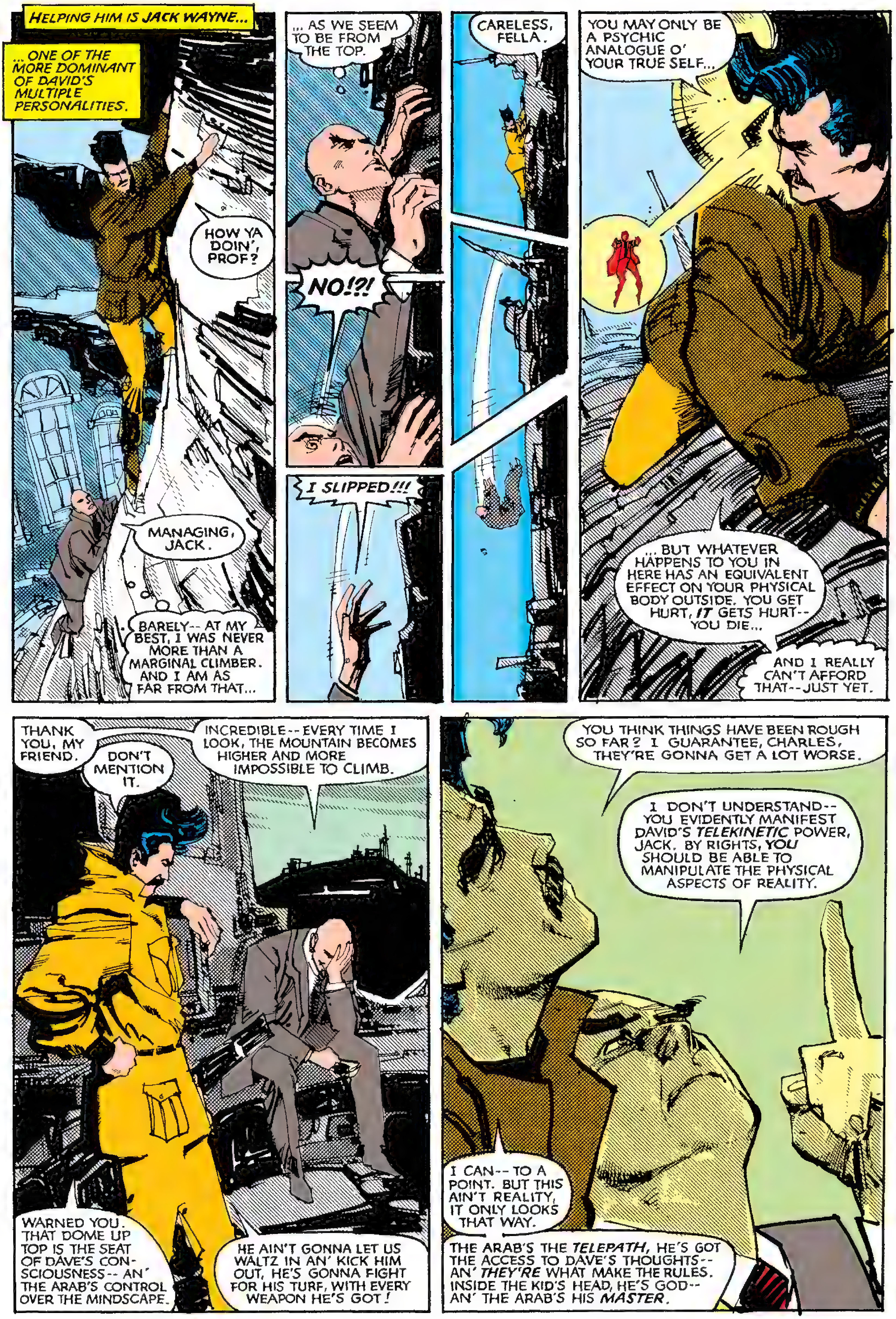
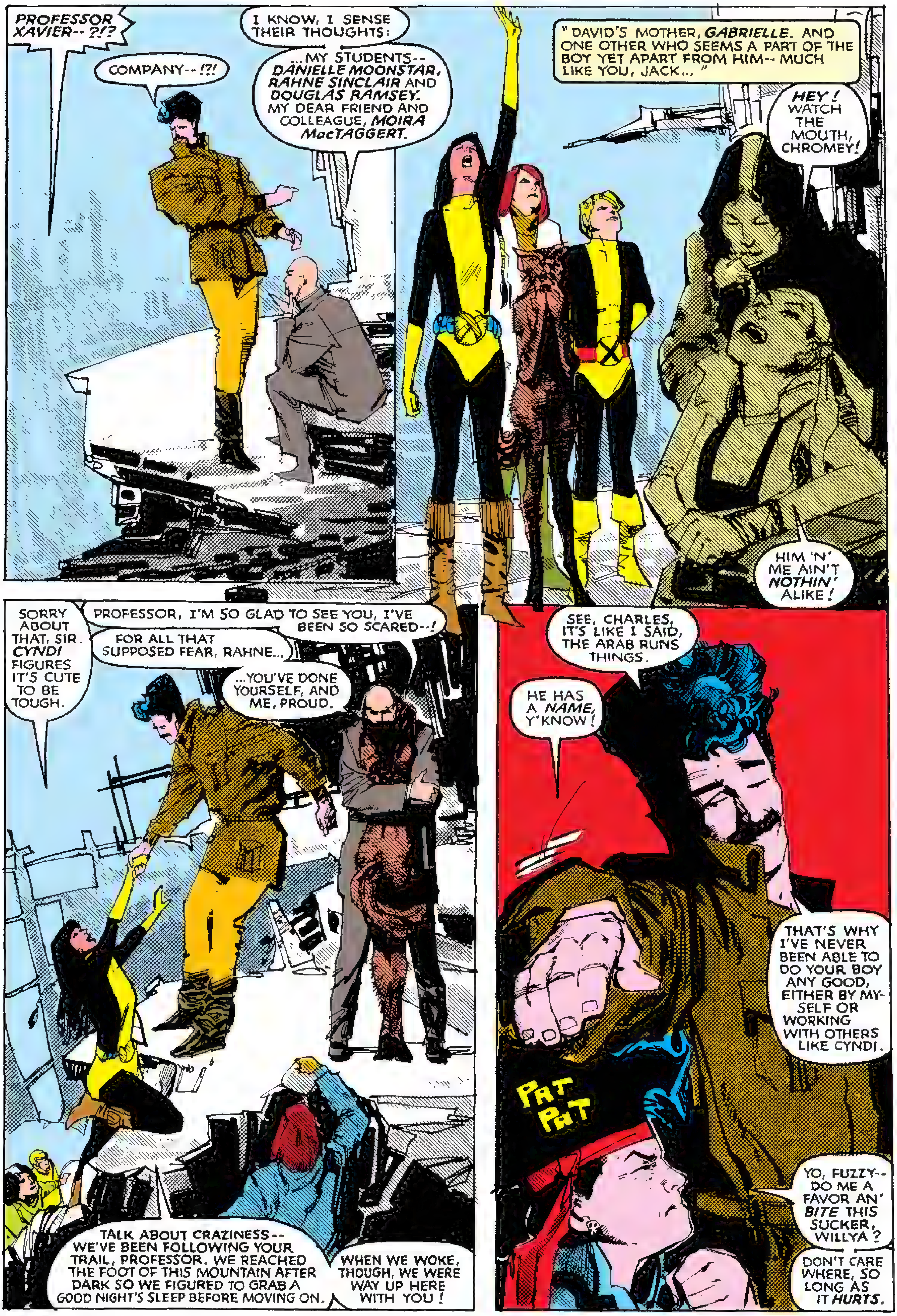
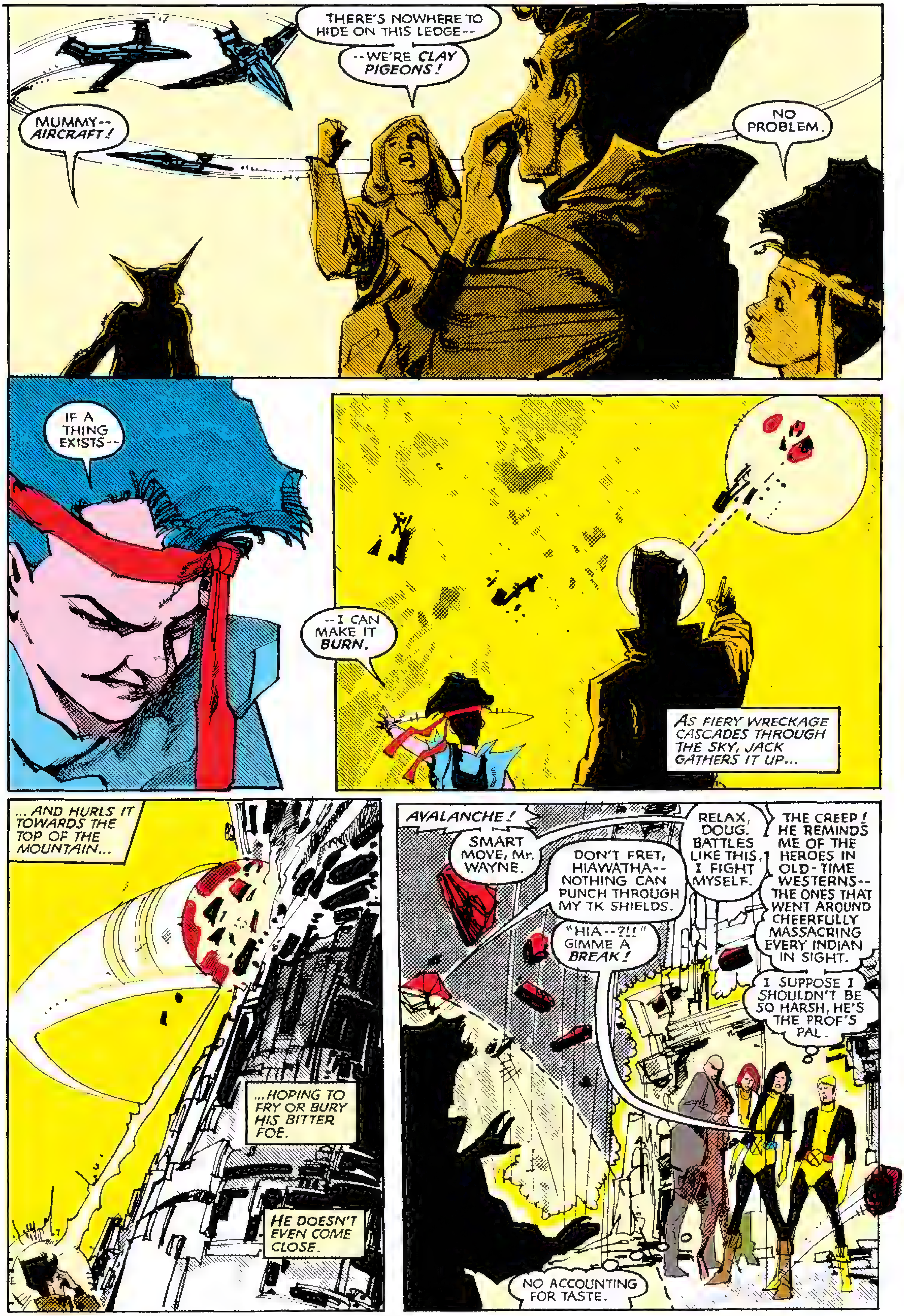
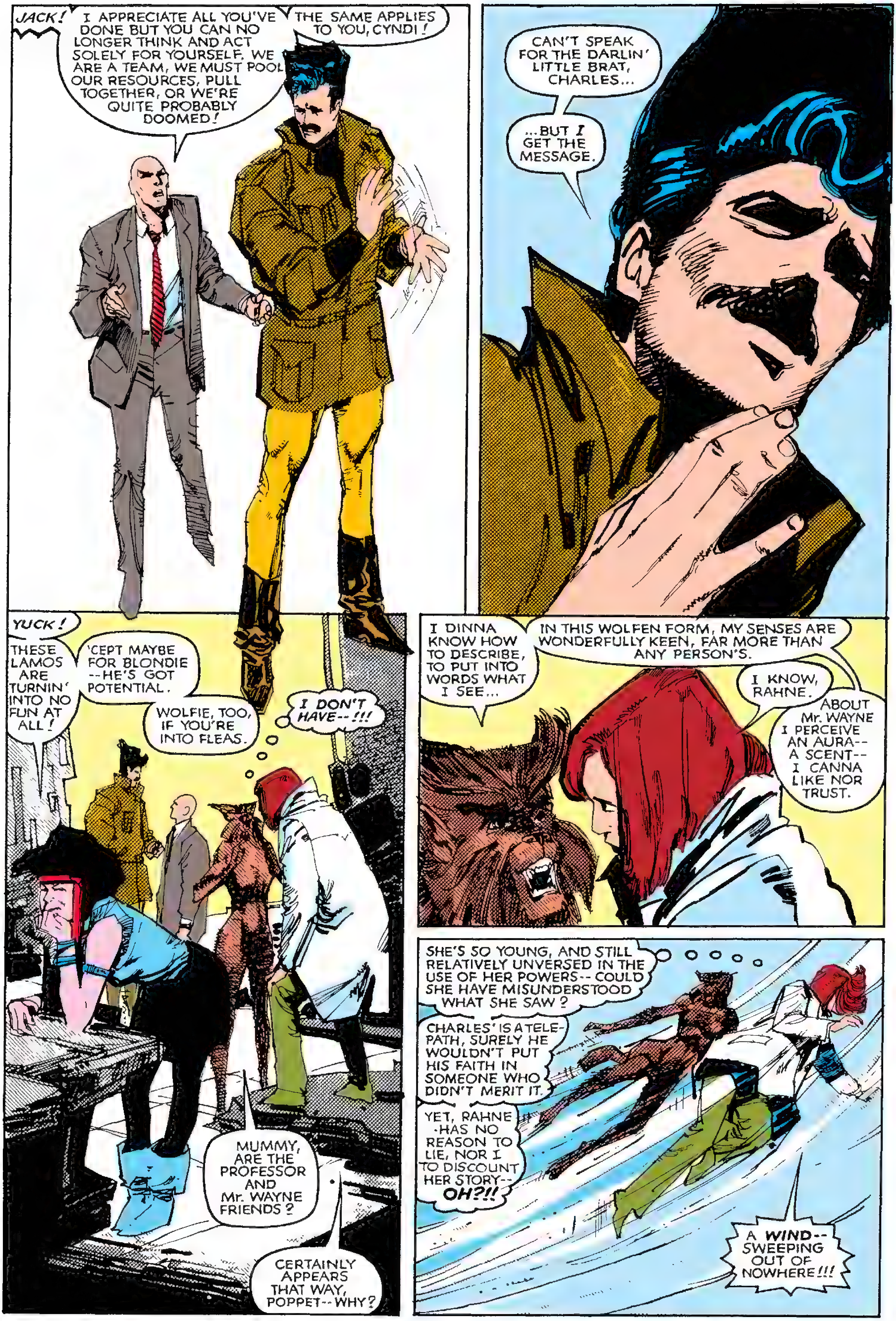
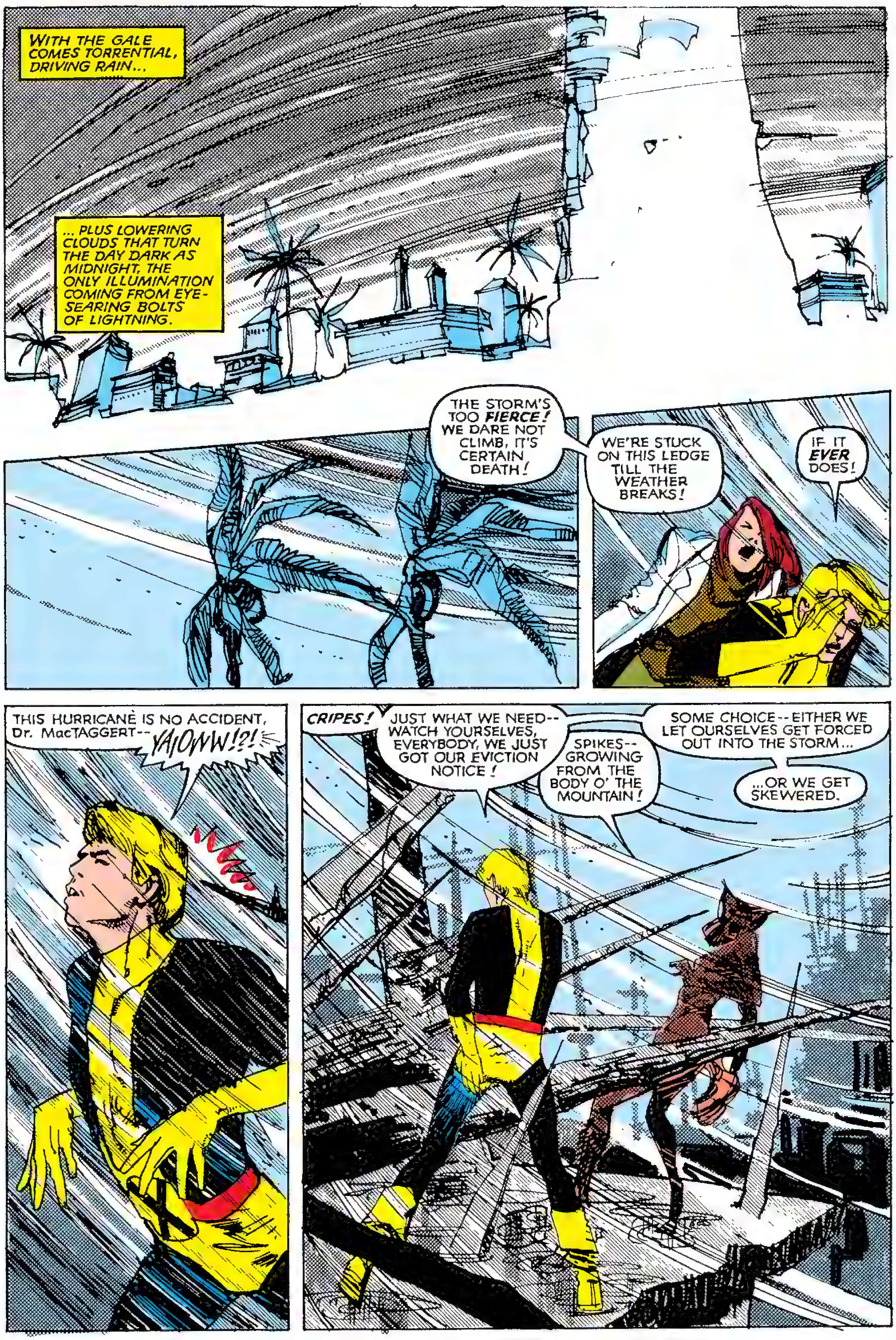
EDITOR IN CHIEF

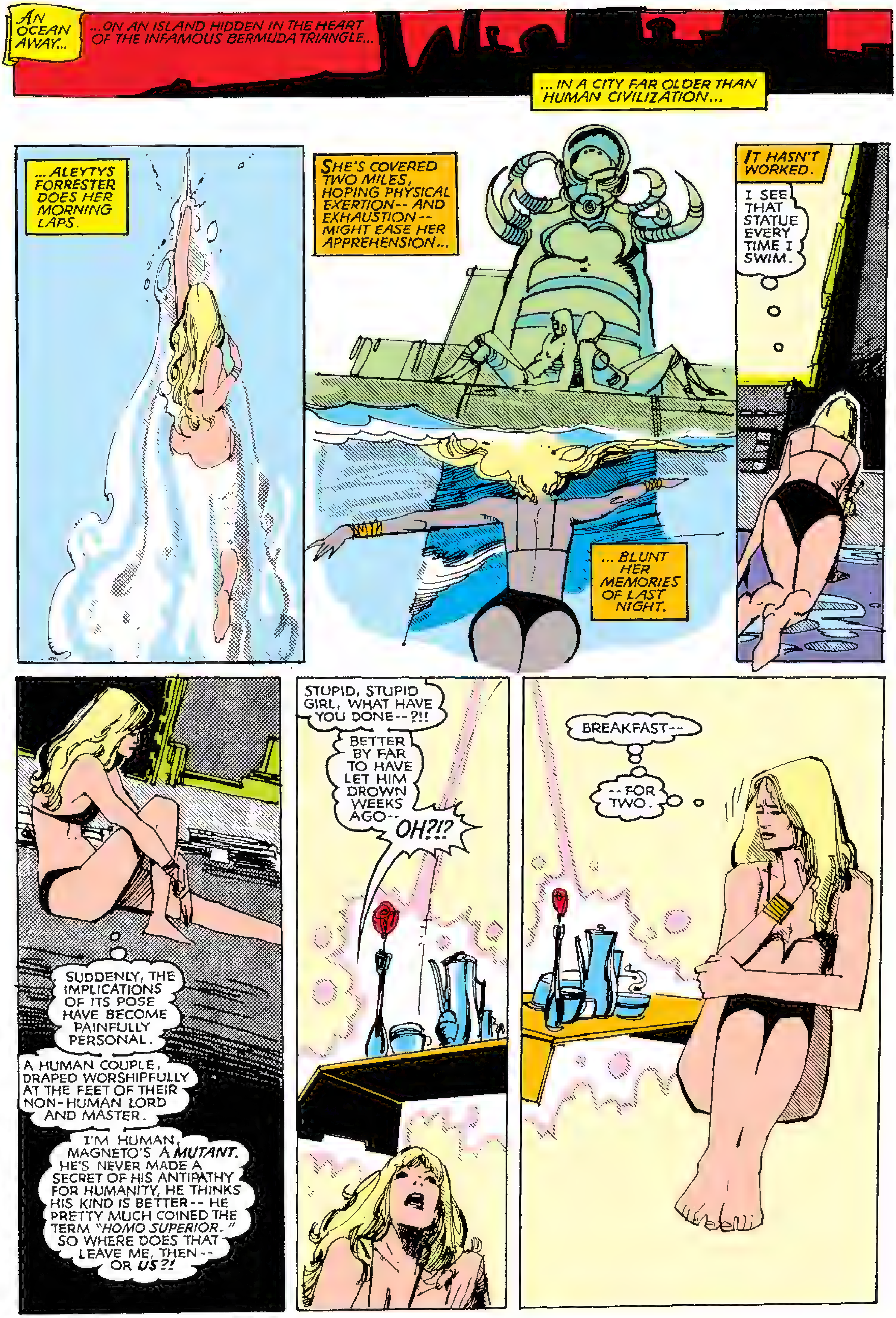

HELPING HIM IS JACK WAYNE...
...ONE OF THE MORE DOMINANT OF DAVID'S MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES.
HOW YA DOIN', PROF?
MANAGING, JACK.
BARELY-- AT MY BEST, I WAS NEVER MORE THAN A MARGINAL CLIMBER. AND I AM AS FAR FROM THAT...
...AS WE SEEM TO BE FROM THE TOP.
NO!?!
I SLIPPED!!!
CARELESS, FELLA.
YOU MAY ONLY BE A PSYCHIC ANALOGUE O' YOUR TRUE SELF...
...BUT WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOU IN HERE HAS AN EQUIVALENT EFFECT ON YOUR PHYSICAL BODY OUTSIDE. YOU GET HURT, IT GETS HURT-- YOU DIE...
AND I REALLY CAN'T AFFORD THAT--JUST YET.
THANK YOU, MY FRIEND.
DON'T MENTION IT.
INCREDIBLE--EVERY TIME I LOOK, THE MOUNTAIN BECOMES HIGHER AND MORE IMPOSSIBLE TO CLIMB.
WARNED YOU. THAT DOME UP TOP IS THE SEAT OF DAVE'S CONSCIOUSNESS-- AN' THE ARAB'S CONTROL OVER THE MINDSCAPE.
HE AIN'T GONNA LET US WALTZ IN AN' KICK HIM OUT, HE'S GONNA FIGHT FOR HIS TURF, WITH EVERY WEAPON HE'S GOT!
YOU THINK THINGS HAVE BEEN ROUGH SO FAR? I GUARANTEE, CHARLES, THEY'RE GONNA GET A LOT WORSE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- YOU EVIDENTLY MANIFEST DAVID'S TELEKINETIC POWER, JACK. BY RIGHTS, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF REALITY.
I CAN-- TO A POINT. BUT THIS AIN'T REALITY, IT ONLY LOOKS THAT WAY.
THE ARAB'S THE TELEPATH, HE'S GOT THE ACCESS TO DAVE'S THOUGHTS-- AN' THEY'RE WHAT MAKE THE RULES. INSIDE THE KID'S HEAD, HE'S GOD-- AN' THE ARAB'S HIS MASTER.

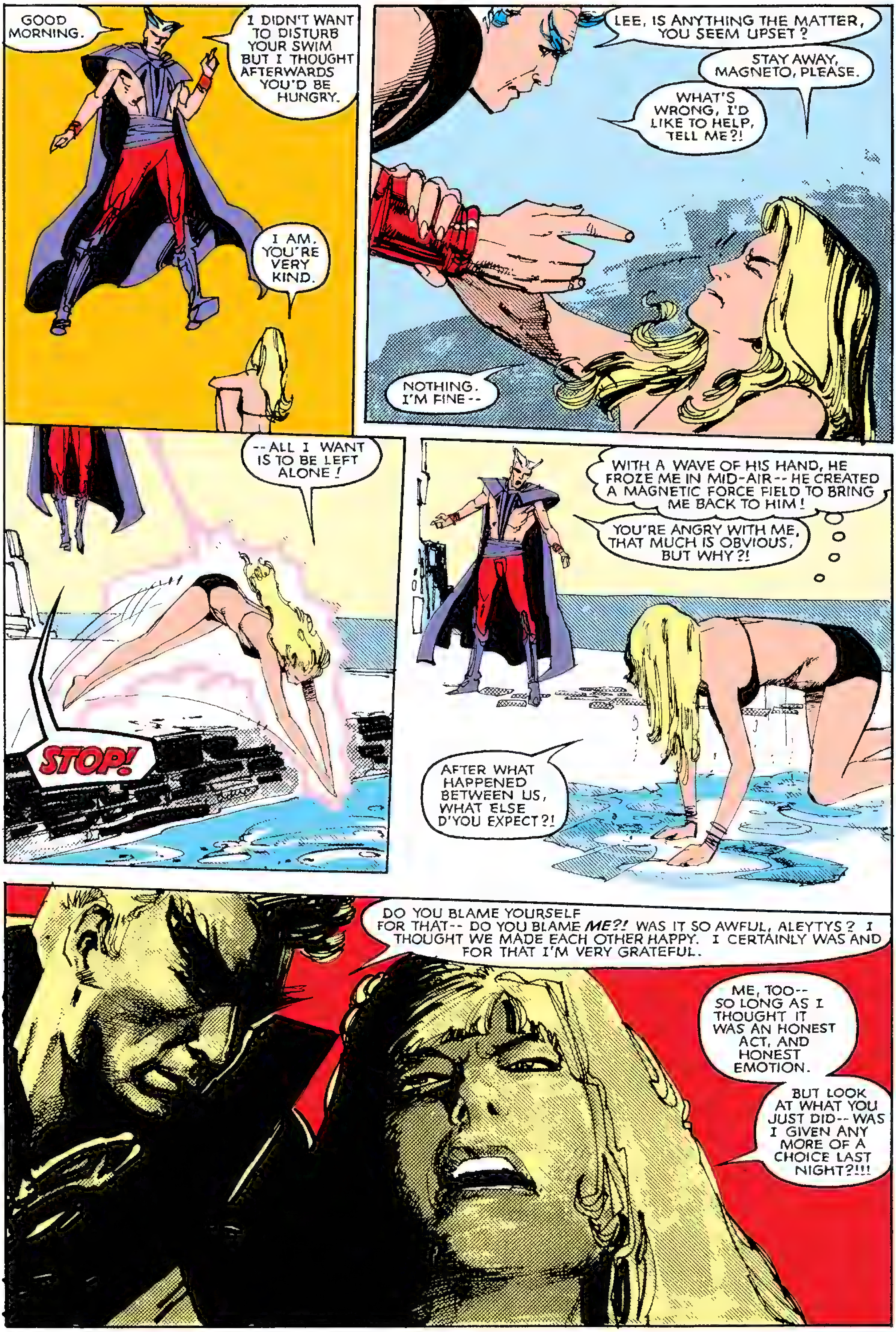

PROFESSOR XAVIER--?!?
COMPANY--!?!
I KNOW, I SENSE THEIR THOUGHTS:
...MY STUDENTS-- **DANIELLE MOONSTAR, RAHNE SINCLAIR** AND **DOUGLAS RAMSEY.** MY DEAR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE, **MOIRA MacTAGGERT.**
"DAVID'S MOTHER, **GABRIELLE.** AND ONE OTHER WHO SEEMS A PART OF THE BOY YET APART FROM HIM-- MUCH LIKE YOU, JACK..."
**HEY!** WATCH THE MOUTH, CHROMEY!
HIM 'N' ME AIN'T **NOTHIN'** ALIKE!
SORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR. **CYNDI** FIGURES IT'S CUTE TO BE TOUGH.
PROFESSOR, I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU, I'VE BEEN SO SCARED--!
FOR ALL THAT SUPPOSED FEAR, RAHNE...
...YOU'VE DONE YOURSELF, AND ME, PROUD.
TALK ABOUT CRAZINESS-- WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR TRAIL, PROFESSOR. WE REACHED THE FOOT OF THIS MOUNTAIN AFTER DARK SO WE FIGURED TO GRAB A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP BEFORE MOVING ON.
WHEN WE WOKE, THOUGH, WE WERE WAY UP HERE WITH YOU!
SEE, CHARLES, IT'S LIKE I SAID, THE ARAB RUNS THINGS.
HE HAS A **NAME,** Y'KNOW!
THAT'S WHY I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO DO YOUR BOY ANY GOOD, EITHER BY MYSELF OR WORKING WITH OTHERS LIKE CYNDI.
PAT PAT
YO, FUZZY-- DO ME A FAVOR AN' **BITE** THIS SUCKER, WILLYA?
DON'T CARE WHERE, SO LONG AS IT **HURTS.**

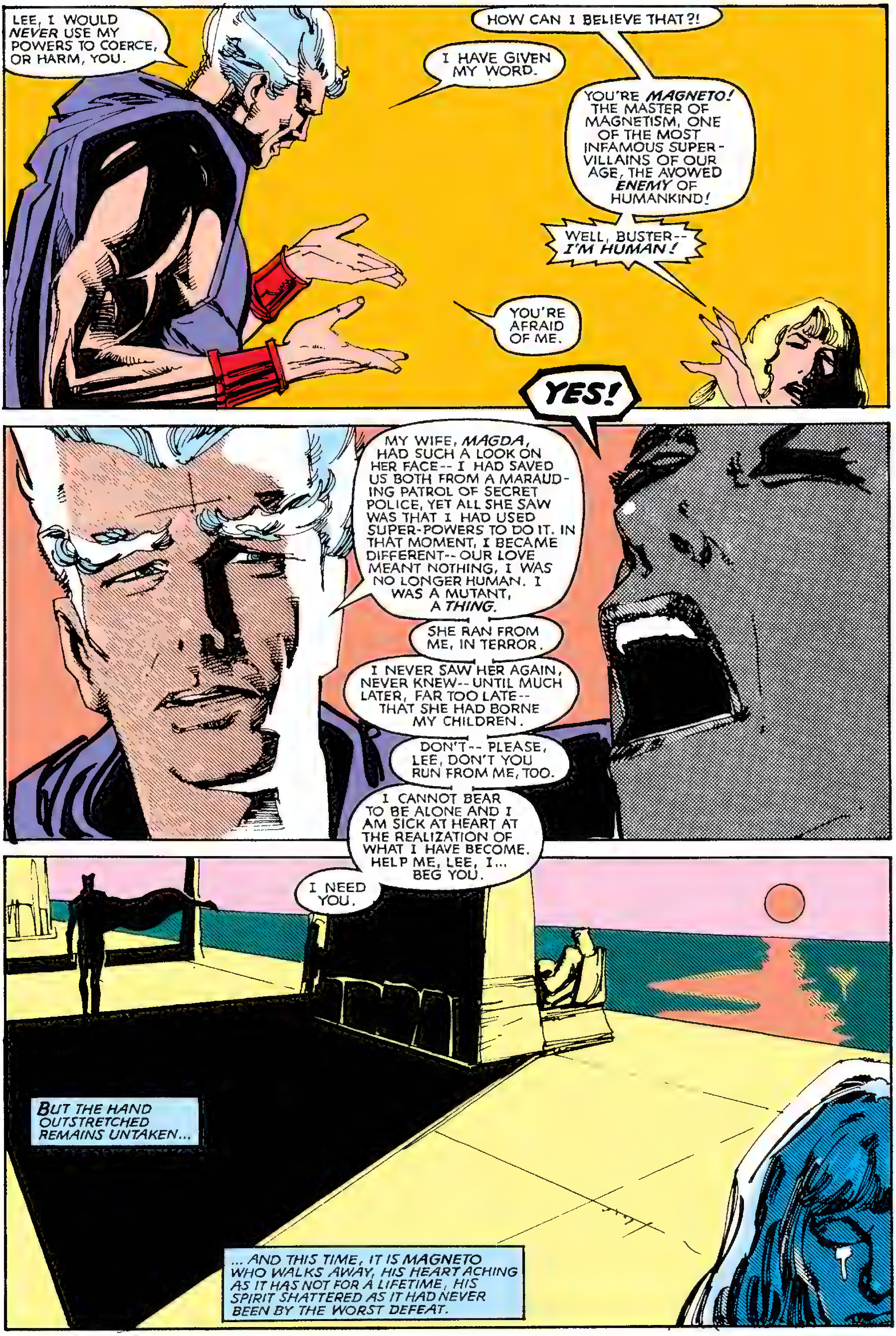

THERE'S NOWHERE TO HIDE ON THIS LEDGE--
--WE'RE CLAY PIGEONS!
MUMMY-- AIRCRAFT!
NO PROBLEM.
IF A THING EXISTS--
--I CAN MAKE IT BURN.
AS FIERY WRECKAGE CASCADES THROUGH THE SKY, JACK GATHERS IT UP...
...AND HURLS IT TOWARDS THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN...
...HOPING TO FRY OR BURY HIS BITTER FOE.
HE DOESN'T EVEN COME CLOSE.
AVALANCHE!
SMART MOVE, Mr. WAYNE.
DON'T FRET, HIAWATHA-- NOTHING CAN PUNCH THROUGH MY TK SHIELDS.
"HIA--?!!" GIMME A BREAK!
RELAX, DOUG. BATTLES LIKE THIS, I FIGHT MYSELF.
THE CREEP! HE REMINDS ME OF THE HEROES IN OLD-TIME WESTERNS-- THE ONES THAT WENT AROUND CHEERFULLY MASSACRING EVERY INDIAN IN SIGHT.
I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T BE SO HARSH, HE'S THE PROF'S PAL.
NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE.

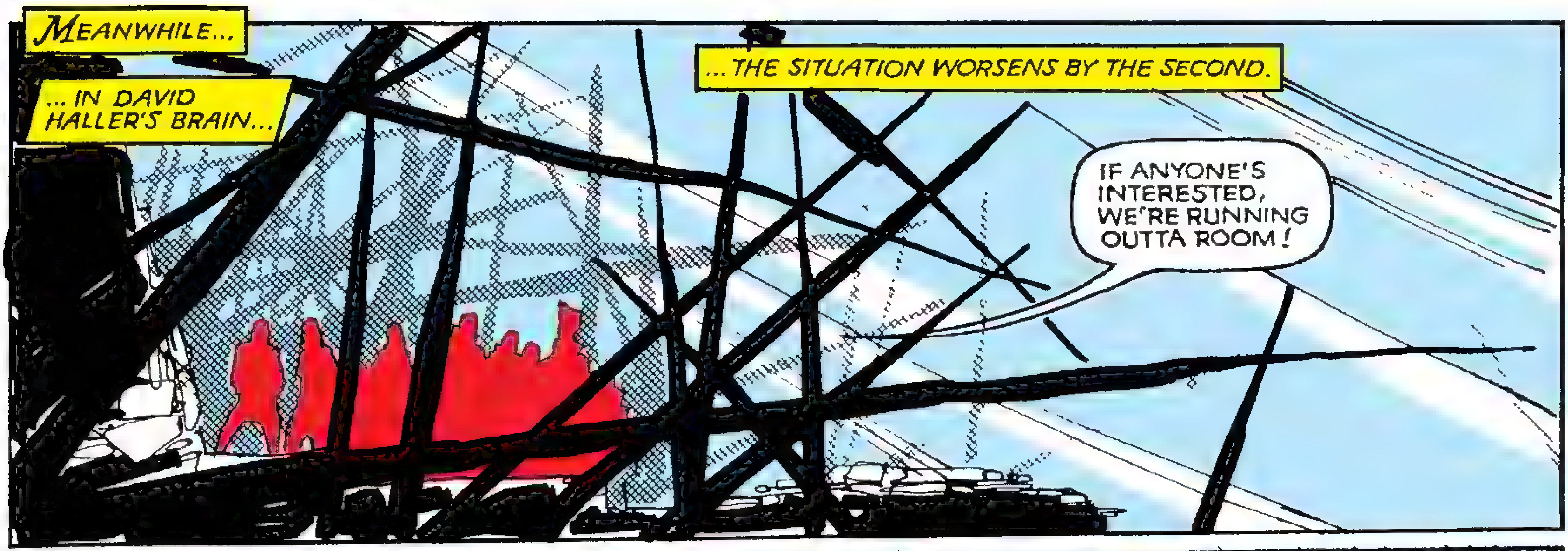

JACK!
I APPRECIATE ALL YOU'VE DONE BUT YOU CAN NO LONGER THINK AND ACT SOLELY FOR YOURSELF. WE ARE A TEAM, WE MUST POOL OUR RESOURCES, PULL TOGETHER, OR WE'RE QUITE PROBABLY DOOMED!
THE SAME APPLIES TO YOU, CYNDI!
CAN'T SPEAK FOR THE DARLIN' LITTLE BRAT, CHARLES...
...BUT I GET THE MESSAGE.
YUCK! THESE LAMOS ARE TURNIN' INTO NO FUN AT ALL!
'CEPT MAYBE FOR BLONDIE --HE'S GOT POTENTIAL.
WOLFIE, TOO, IF YOU'RE INTO FLEAS.
I DON'T HAVE--!!!
MUMMY, ARE THE PROFESSOR AND Mr. WAYNE FRIENDS?
CERTAINLY APPEARS THAT WAY, POPPET--WHY?
I DINNA KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE, TO PUT INTO WORDS WHAT I SEE...
IN THIS WOLFEN FORM, MY SENSES ARE WONDERFULLY KEEN, FAR MORE THAN ANY PERSON'S.
I KNOW, RAHNE.
ABOUT Mr. WAYNE I PERCEIVE AN AURA-- A SCENT-- I CANNA LIKE NOR TRUST.
SHE'S SO YOUNG, AND STILL RELATIVELY UNVERSED IN THE USE OF HER POWERS-- COULD SHE HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT SHE SAW?
CHARLES' IS A TELEPATH, SURELY HE WOULDN'T PUT HIS FAITH IN SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T MERIT IT.
YET, RAHNE HAS NO REASON TO LIE, NOR I TO DISCOUNT HER STORY-- OH?!!
A WIND-- SWEEPING OUT OF NOWHERE!!!

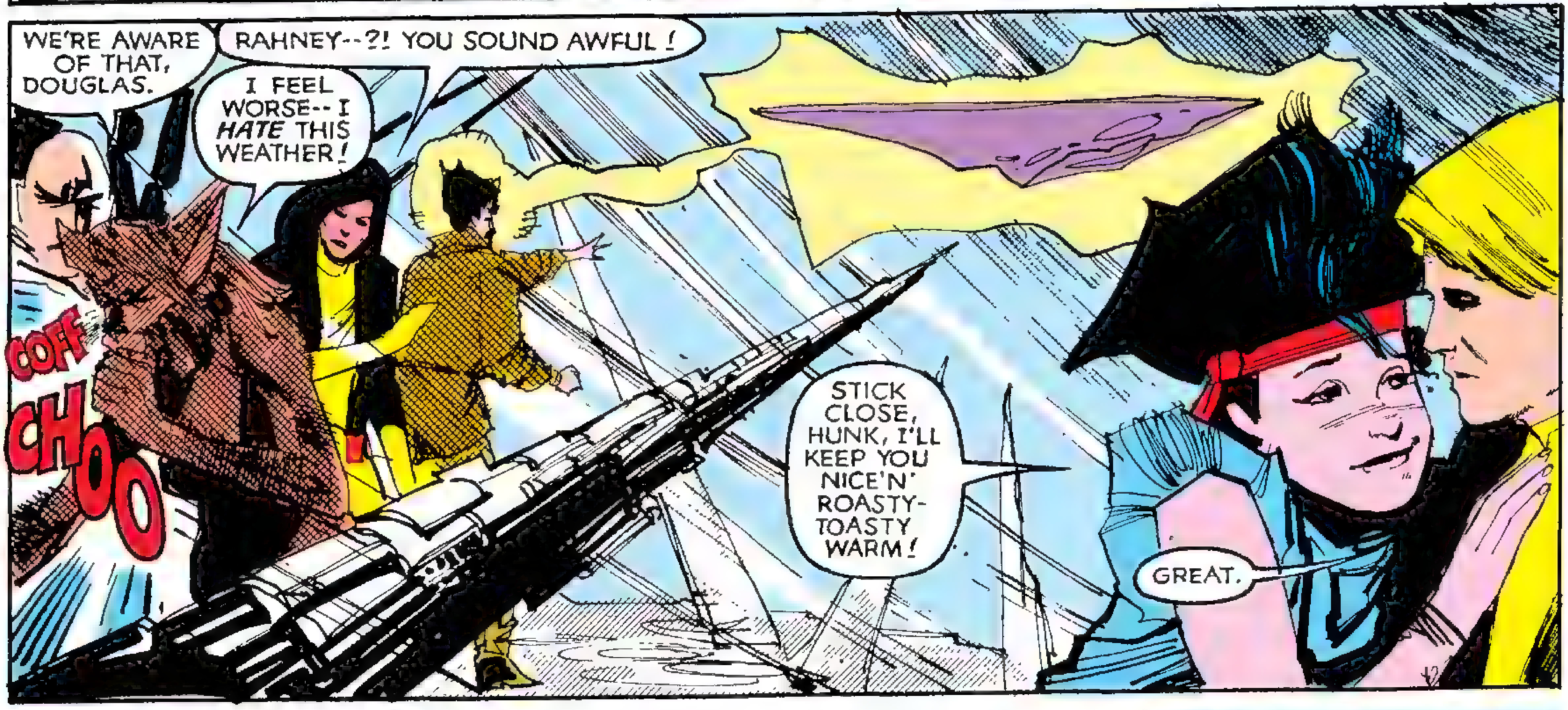

WITH THE GALE COMES TORRENTIAL, DRIVING RAIN...
... PLUS LOWERING CLOUDS THAT TURN THE DAY DARK AS MIDNIGHT, THE ONLY ILLUMINATION COMING FROM EYE-SEARING BOLTS OF LIGHTNING.
THE STORM'S TOO FIERCE! WE DARE NOT CLIMB, IT'S CERTAIN DEATH!
WE'RE STUCK ON THIS LEDGE TILL THE WEATHER BREAKS!
IF IT EVER DOES!
THIS HURRICANE IS NO ACCIDENT, Dr. MacTAGGERT--
YAIOWW!?!
CRIPES!
JUST WHAT WE NEED-- WATCH YOURSELVES, EVERYBODY, WE JUST GOT OUR EVICTION NOTICE!
SPIKES-- GROWING FROM THE BODY O' THE MOUNTAIN!
SOME CHOICE--EITHER WE LET OURSELVES GET FORCED OUT INTO THE STORM...
...OR WE GET SKEWERED.

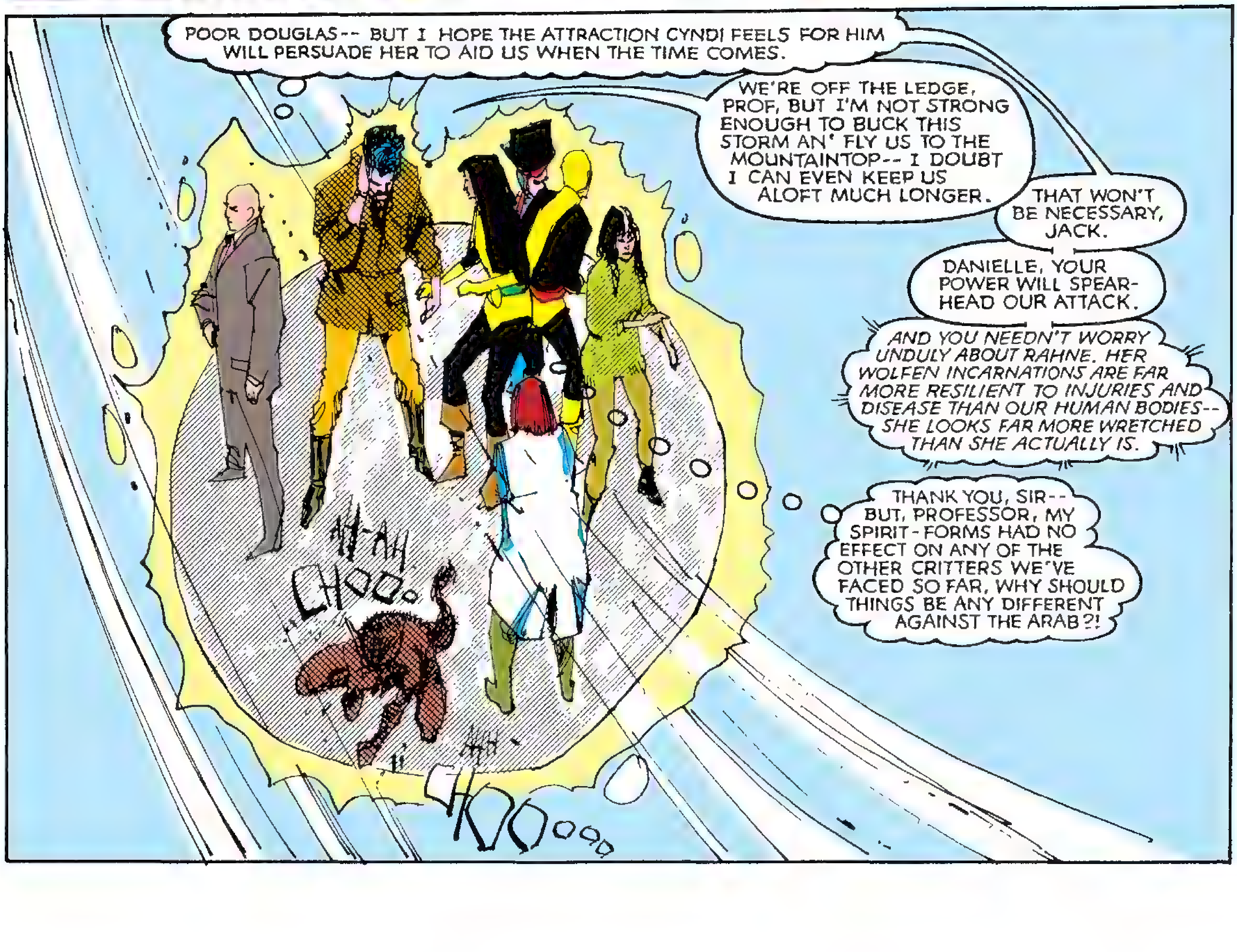

AN OCEAN AWAY...
...ON AN ISLAND HIDDEN IN THE HEART OF THE INFAMOUS BERMUDA TRIANGLE...
...IN A CITY FAR OLDER THAN HUMAN CIVILIZATION...
...ALEYTYS FORRESTER DOES HER MORNING LAPS.
SHE'S COVERED TWO MILES, HOPING PHYSICAL EXERTION-- AND EXHAUSTION-- MIGHT EASE HER APPREHENSION...
...BLUNT HER MEMORIES OF LAST NIGHT.
IT HASN'T WORKED.
I SEE THAT STATUE EVERY TIME I SWIM.
SUDDENLY, THE IMPLICATIONS OF ITS POSE HAVE BECOME PAINFULLY PERSONAL.
A HUMAN COUPLE, DRAPED WORSHIPFULLY AT THE FEET OF THEIR NON-HUMAN LORD AND MASTER.
I'M HUMAN, MAGNETO'S A MUTANT. HE'S NEVER MADE A SECRET OF HIS ANTIPATHY FOR HUMANITY, HE THINKS HIS KIND IS BETTER-- HE PRETTY MUCH COINED THE TERM "HOMO SUPERIOR." SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE ME, THEN-- OR US?!
STUPID, STUPID GIRL, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE--?!!
BETTER BY FAR TO HAVE LET HIM DROWN WEEKS AGO--
OH?!?
BREAKFAST--
--FOR TWO.

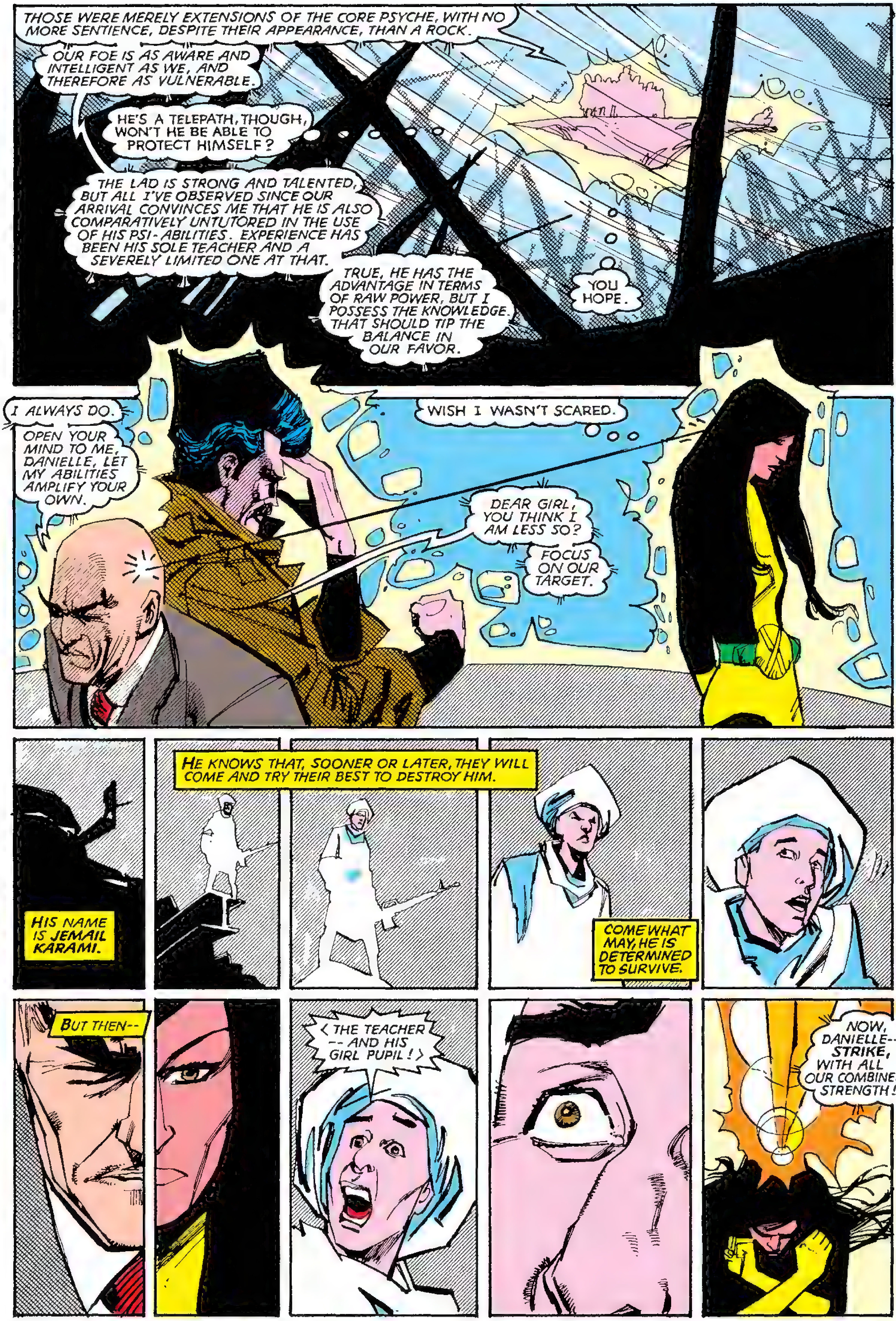

GOOD MORNING.
I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB YOUR SWIM BUT I THOUGHT AFTERWARDS YOU'D BE HUNGRY.
I AM. YOU'RE VERY KIND.
LEE, IS ANYTHING THE MATTER, YOU SEEM UPSET?
STAY AWAY, MAGNETO, PLEASE.
WHAT'S WRONG, I'D LIKE TO HELP, TELL ME?!
NOTHING. I'M FINE--
--ALL I WANT IS TO BE LEFT ALONE!
STOP!
WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND, HE FROZE ME IN MID-AIR--HE CREATED A MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD TO BRING ME BACK TO HIM!
YOU'RE ANGRY WITH ME, THAT MUCH IS OBVIOUS, BUT WHY?!
AFTER WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US, WHAT ELSE D'YOU EXPECT?!
DO YOU BLAME YOURSELF FOR THAT-- DO YOU BLAME *ME?!* WAS IT SO AWFUL, ALEYTYS? I THOUGHT WE MADE EACH OTHER HAPPY. I CERTAINLY WAS AND FOR THAT I'M VERY GRATEFUL.
ME, TOO-- SO LONG AS I THOUGHT IT WAS AN HONEST ACT, AND HONEST EMOTION.
BUT LOOK AT WHAT YOU JUST DID--WAS I GIVEN ANY MORE OF A CHOICE LAST NIGHT?!!!

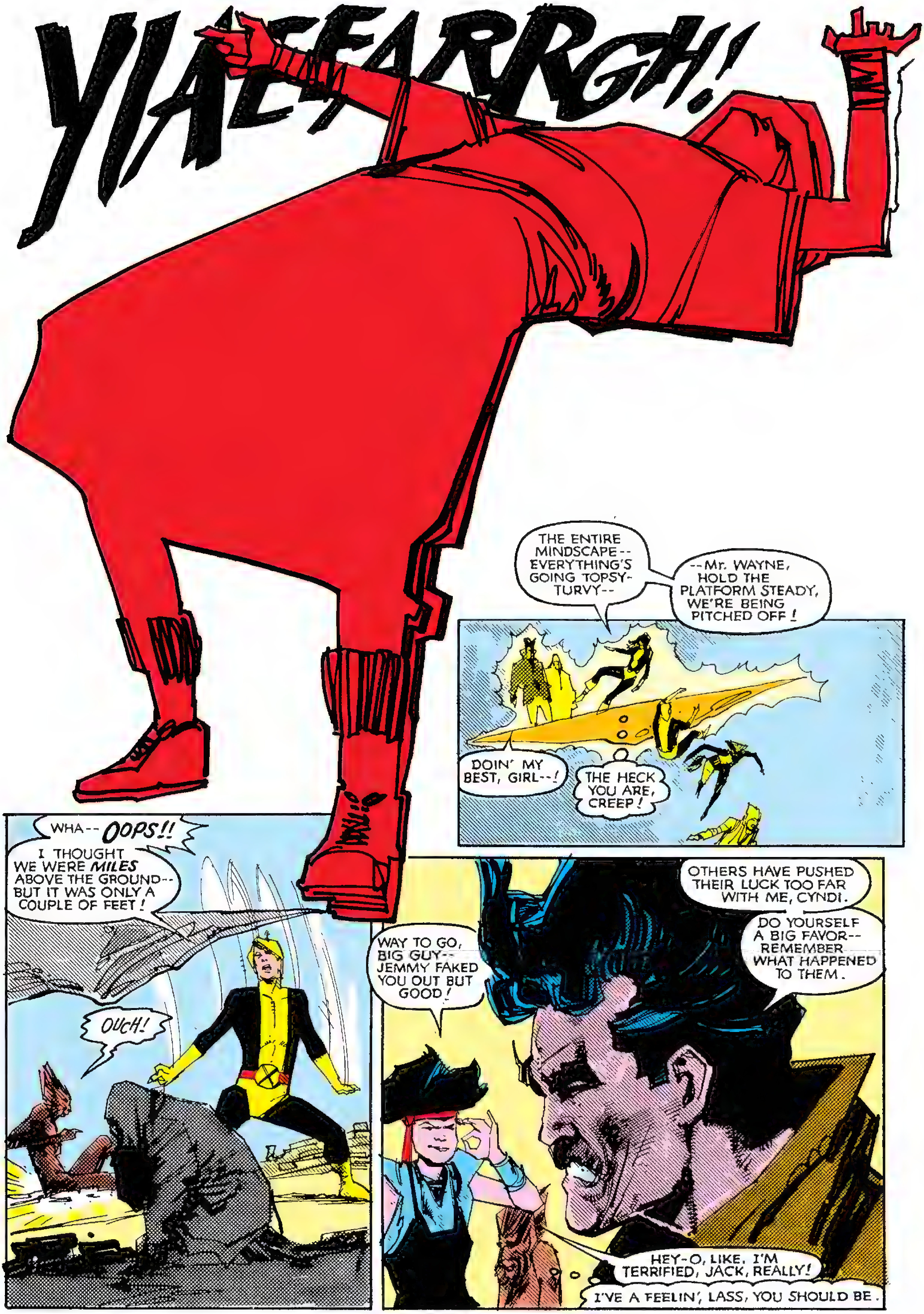

LEE, I WOULD *NEVER* USE MY POWERS TO COERCE, OR HARM, YOU.
I HAVE GIVEN MY WORD.
HOW CAN I BELIEVE THAT?!
YOU'RE ***MAGNETO!*** THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM, ONE OF THE MOST INFAMOUS SUPER-VILLAINS OF OUR AGE, THE AVOWED ***ENEMY*** OF HUMANKIND!
WELL, BUSTER-- ***I'M HUMAN!***
YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME.
***YES!***
MY WIFE, ***MAGDA***, HAD SUCH A LOOK ON HER FACE-- I HAD SAVED US BOTH FROM A MARAUDING PATROL OF SECRET POLICE, YET ALL SHE SAW WAS THAT I HAD USED SUPER-POWERS TO DO IT. IN THAT MOMENT, I BECAME DIFFERENT-- OUR LOVE MEANT NOTHING, I WAS NO LONGER HUMAN. I WAS A MUTANT, A *THING.*
SHE RAN FROM ME, IN TERROR.
I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN, NEVER KNEW-- UNTIL MUCH LATER, FAR TOO LATE-- THAT SHE HAD BORNE MY CHILDREN.
DON'T-- PLEASE, LEE, DON'T YOU RUN FROM ME, TOO.
I CANNOT BEAR TO BE ALONE AND I AM SICK AT HEART AT THE REALIZATION OF WHAT I HAVE BECOME. HELP ME, LEE, I... BEG YOU.
I NEED YOU.
*BUT THE HAND OUTSTRETCHED REMAINS UNTAKEN...*
*...AND THIS TIME, IT IS MAGNETO WHO WALKS AWAY, HIS HEART ACHING AS IT HAS NOT FOR A LIFETIME, HIS SPIRIT SHATTERED AS IT HAD NEVER BEEN BY THE WORST DEFEAT.*

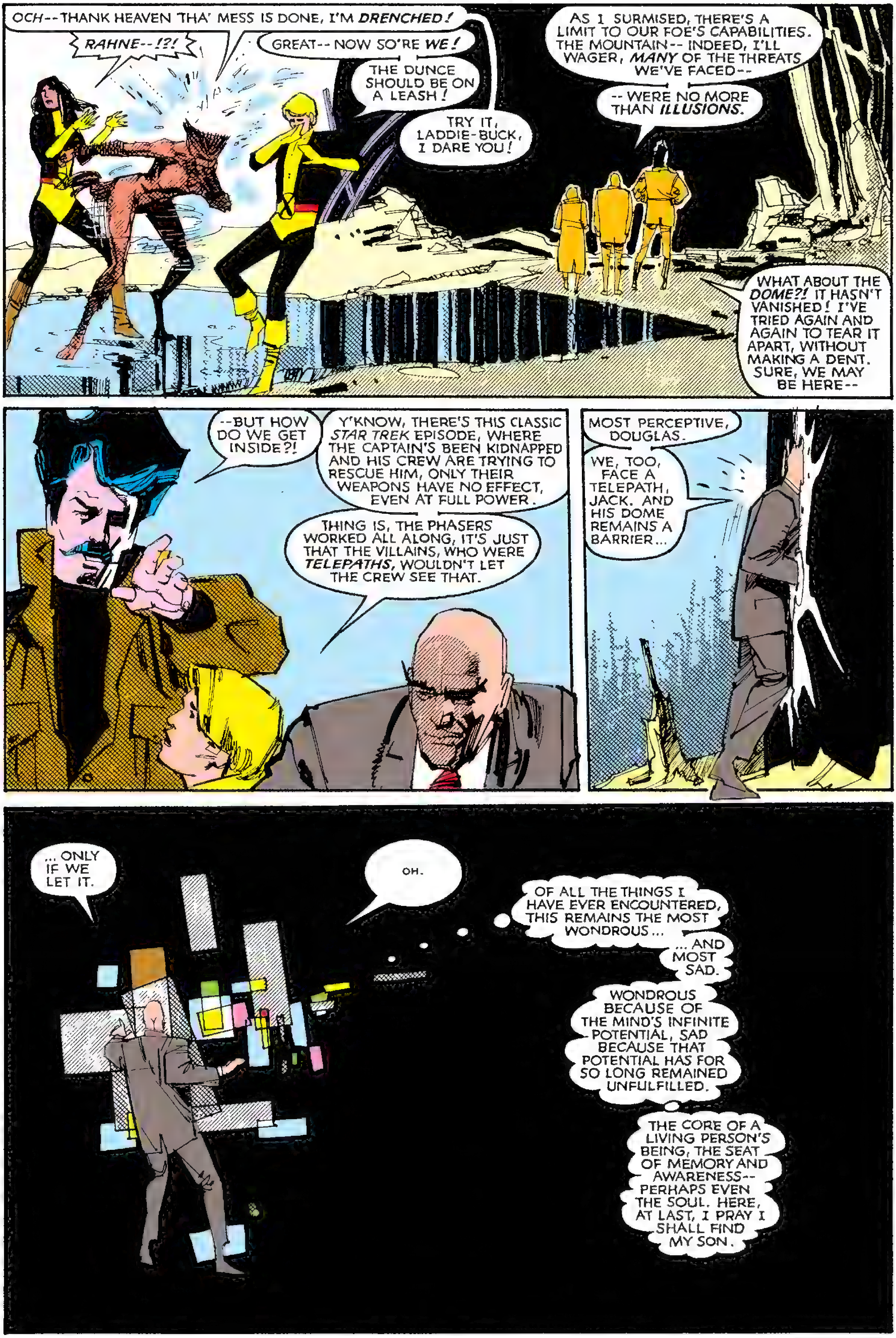

MEANWHILE...
...IN DAVID HALLER'S BRAIN...
...THE SITUATION WORSENS BY THE SECOND.
IF ANYONE'S INTERESTED, WE'RE RUNNING OUTTA ROOM!

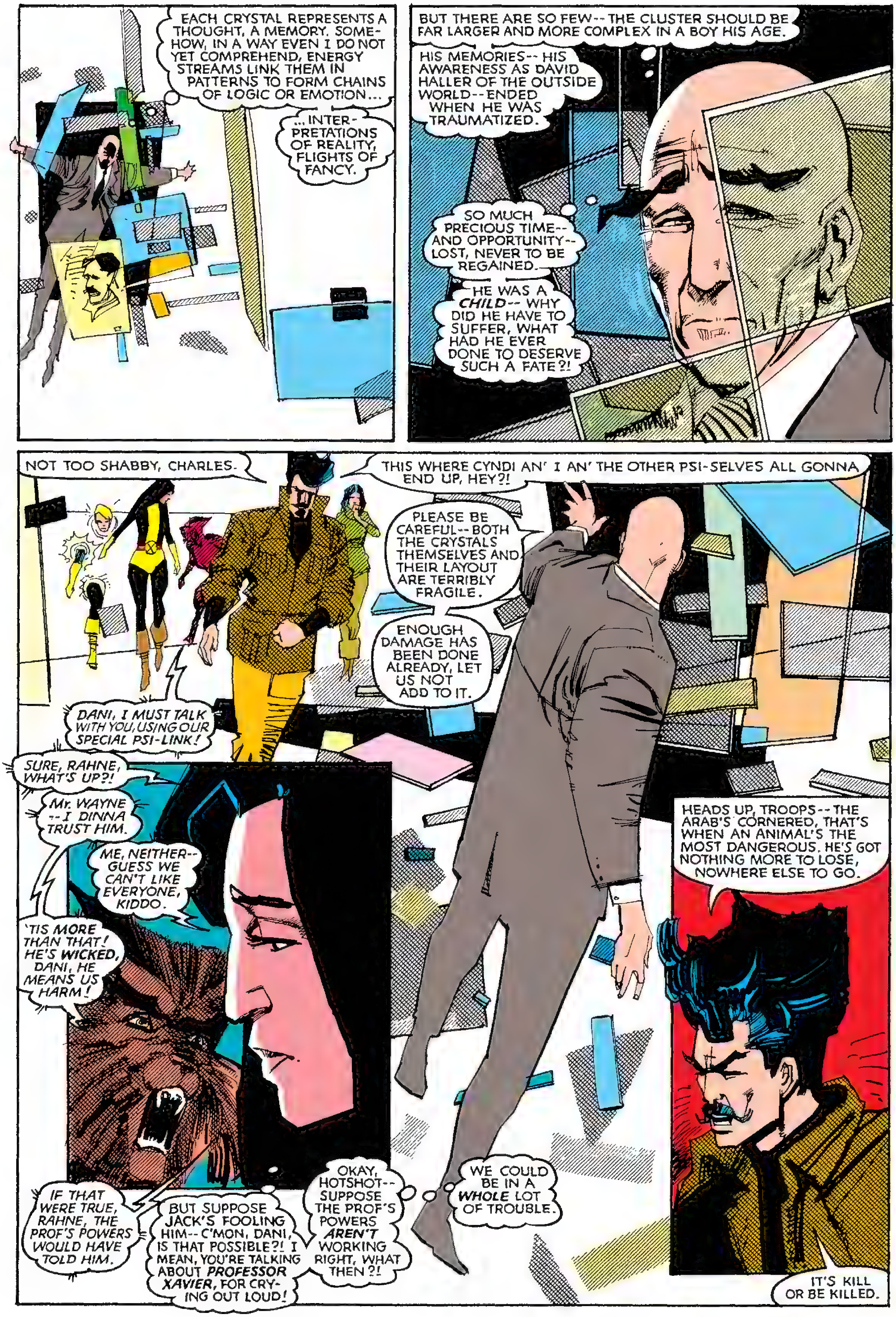

WE'RE AWARE OF THAT, DOUGLAS.
RAHNEY--?! YOU SOUND AWFUL!
I FEEL WORSE-- I *HATE* THIS WEATHER!
COFF
CHOO
STICK CLOSE, HUNK, I'LL KEEP YOU NICE'N' ROASTY-TOASTY WARM!
GREAT.

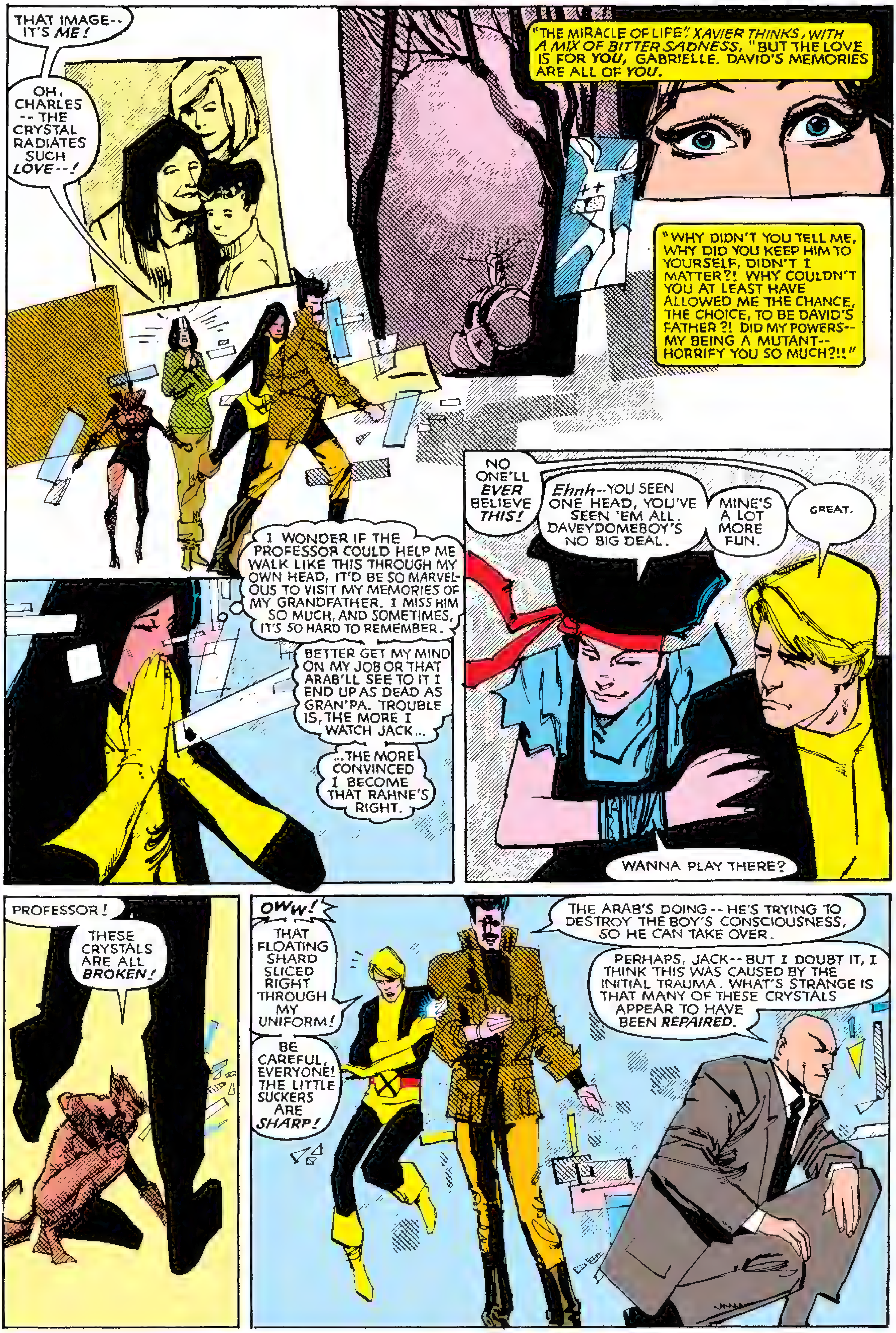

POOR DOUGLAS-- BUT I HOPE THE ATTRACTION CYNDI FEELS FOR HIM WILL PERSUADE HER TO AID US WHEN THE TIME COMES.
WE'RE OFF THE LEDGE, PROF, BUT I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO BUCK THIS STORM AN' FLY US TO THE MOUNTAINTOP-- I DOUBT I CAN EVEN KEEP US ALOFT MUCH LONGER.
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, JACK.
DANIELLE, YOUR POWER WILL SPEARHEAD OUR ATTACK.
*AND YOU NEEDN'T WORRY UNDULY ABOUT RAHNE. HER WOLFEN INCARNATIONS ARE FAR MORE RESILIENT TO INJURIES AND DISEASE THAN OUR HUMAN BODIES-- SHE LOOKS FAR MORE WRETCHED THAN SHE ACTUALLY IS.*
THANK YOU, SIR-- BUT, PROFESSOR, MY SPIRIT-FORMS HAD NO EFFECT ON ANY OF THE OTHER CRITTERS WE'VE FACED SO FAR, WHY SHOULD THINGS BE ANY DIFFERENT AGAINST THE ARAB?!
AH-AH CHOO
AH CHOOooo

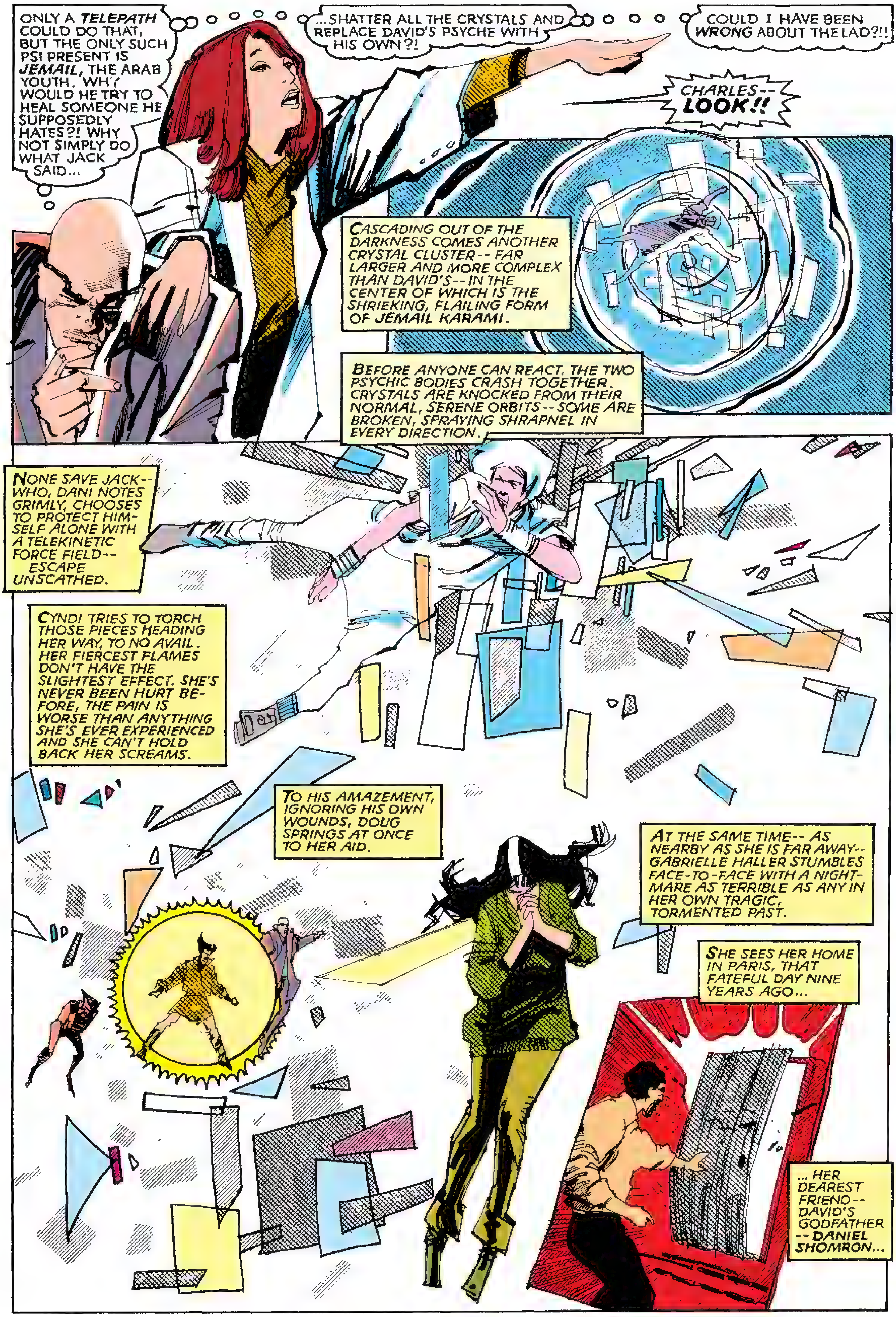

THOSE WERE MERELY EXTENSIONS OF THE CORE PSYCHE, WITH NO MORE SENTIENCE, DESPITE THEIR APPEARANCE, THAN A ROCK.
OUR FOE IS AS AWARE AND INTELLIGENT AS WE, AND THEREFORE AS VULNERABLE.
HE'S A TELEPATH, THOUGH, WON'T HE BE ABLE TO PROTECT HIMSELF?
THE LAD IS STRONG AND TALENTED, BUT ALL I'VE OBSERVED SINCE OUR ARRIVAL CONVINCES ME THAT HE IS ALSO COMPARATIVELY UNTUTORED IN THE USE OF HIS PSI-ABILITIES. EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN HIS SOLE TEACHER AND A SEVERELY LIMITED ONE AT THAT.
TRUE, HE HAS THE ADVANTAGE IN TERMS OF RAW POWER, BUT I POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE. THAT SHOULD TIP THE BALANCE IN OUR FAVOR.
YOU HOPE.
I ALWAYS DO.
OPEN YOUR MIND TO ME, DANIELLE, LET MY ABILITIES AMPLIFY YOUR OWN.
WISH I WASN'T SCARED.
DEAR GIRL, YOU THINK I AM LESS SO?
FOCUS ON OUR TARGET.
HIS NAME IS JEMAIL KARAMI.
HE KNOWS THAT, SOONER OR LATER, THEY WILL COME AND TRY THEIR BEST TO DESTROY HIM.
COME WHAT MAY, HE IS DETERMINED TO SURVIVE.
BUT THEN--
< THE TEACHER -- AND HIS GIRL PUPIL! >
NOW, DANIELLE-- STRIKE, WITH ALL OUR COMBINED STRENGTH!

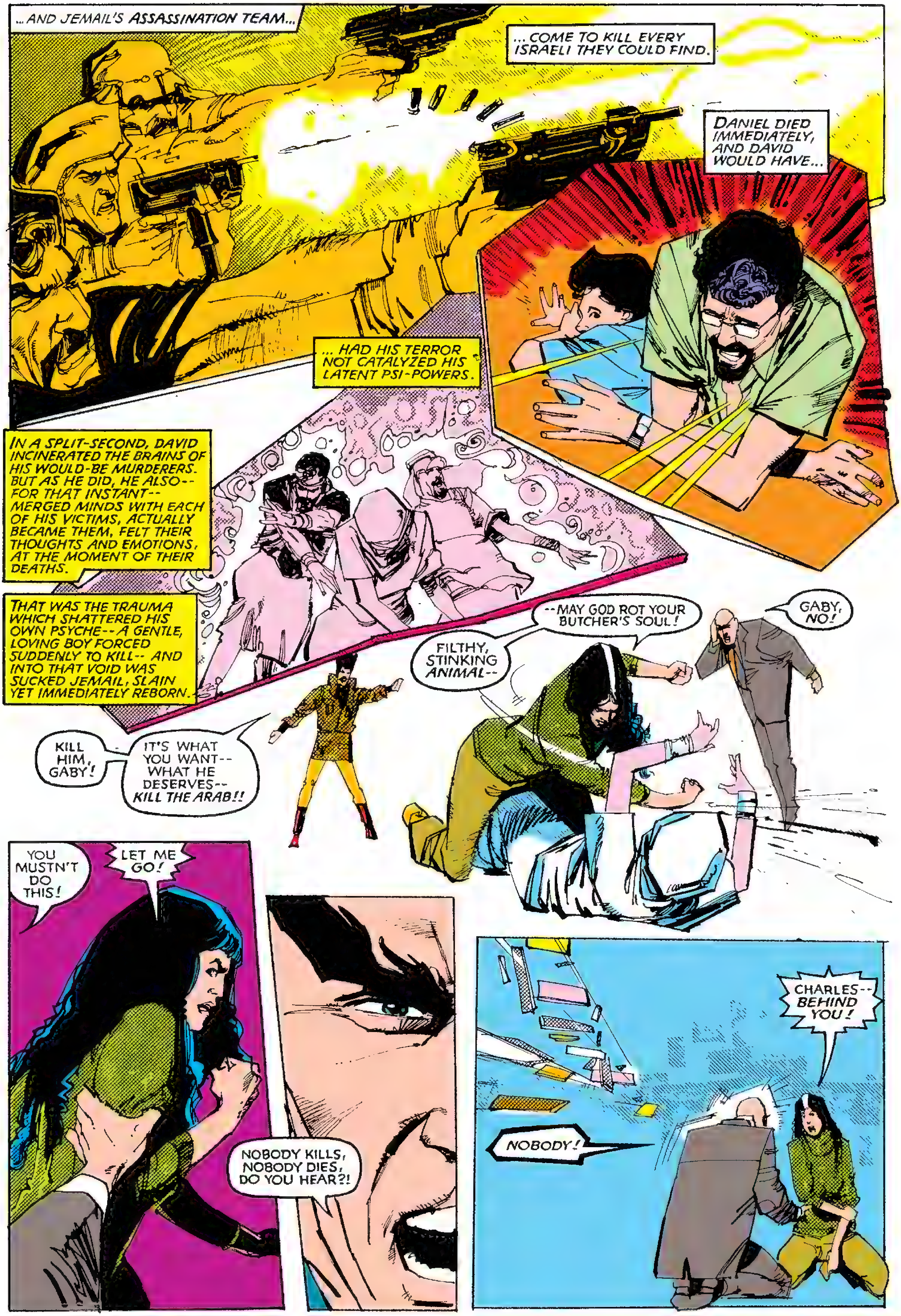

YIAEEARRGH!
THE ENTIRE MINDSCAPE-- EVERYTHING'S GOING TOPSY-TURVY--
--Mr. WAYNE, HOLD THE PLATFORM STEADY, WE'RE BEING PITCHED OFF!
DOIN' MY BEST, GIRL--!
THE HECK YOU ARE, CREEP!
WHA-- OOPS!!
I THOUGHT WE WERE MILES ABOVE THE GROUND-- BUT IT WAS ONLY A COUPLE OF FEET!
OUCH!
WAY TO GO, BIG GUY-- JEMMY FAKED YOU OUT BUT GOOD!
OTHERS HAVE PUSHED THEIR LUCK TOO FAR WITH ME, CYNDI.
DO YOURSELF A BIG FAVOR-- REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.
HEY-O, LIKE, I'M TERRIFIED, JACK, REALLY!
I'VE A FEELIN', LASS, YOU SHOULD BE.

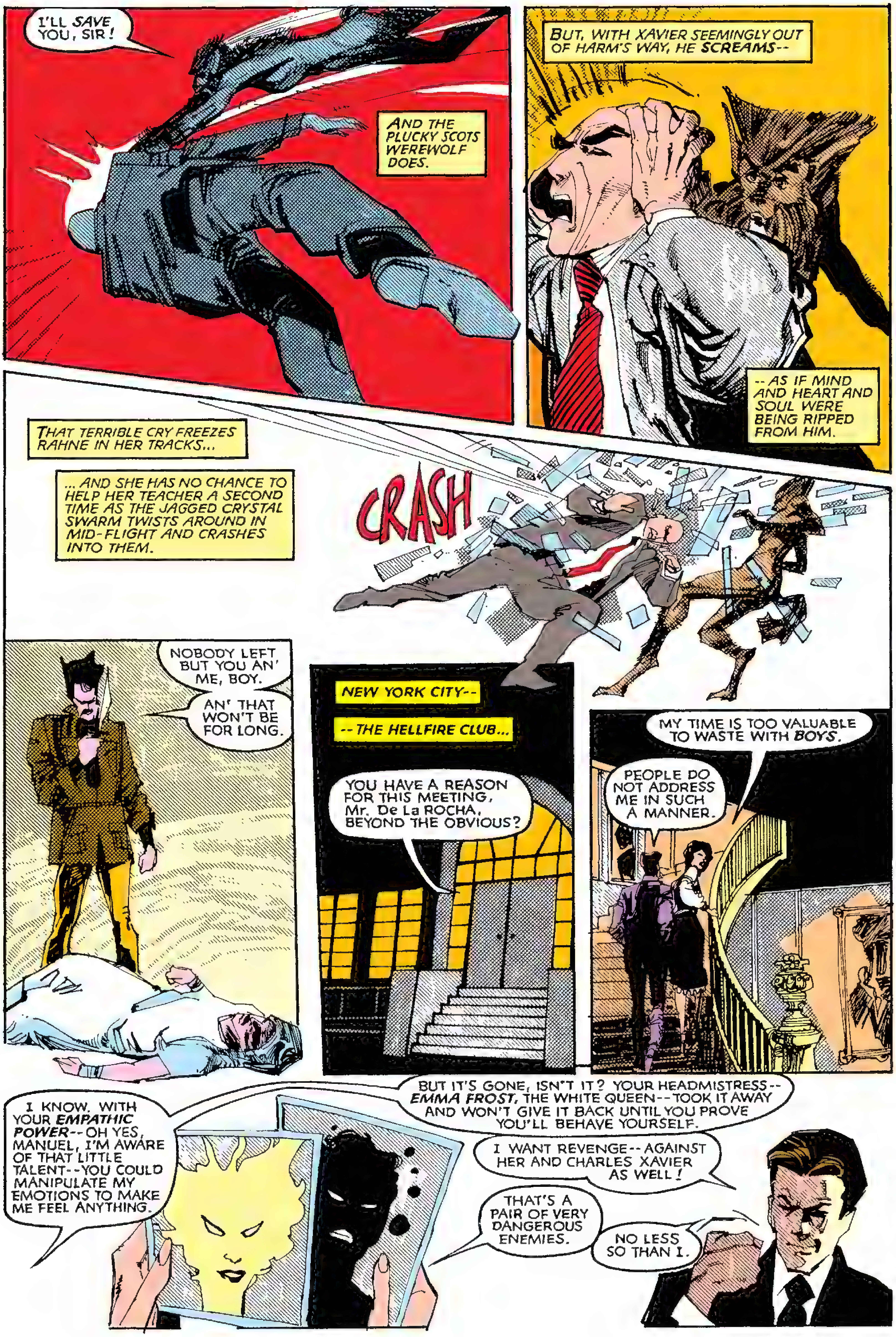

OCH--THANK HEAVEN THA' MESS IS DONE, I'M *DRENCHED!*
*RAHNE--!?!*
GREAT--NOW SO'RE *WE!*
THE DUNCE SHOULD BE ON A LEASH!
TRY IT, LADDIE-BUCK, I DARE YOU!
AS I SURMISED, THERE'S A LIMIT TO OUR FOE'S CAPABILITIES. THE MOUNTAIN--INDEED, I'LL WAGER, *MANY* OF THE THREATS WE'VE FACED--
--WERE NO MORE THAN *ILLUSIONS.*
WHAT ABOUT THE *DOME?!* IT HASN'T VANISHED! I'VE TRIED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO TEAR IT APART, WITHOUT MAKING A DENT. SURE, WE MAY BE HERE--
--BUT HOW DO WE GET INSIDE?!
Y'KNOW, THERE'S THIS CLASSIC *STAR TREK* EPISODE, WHERE THE CAPTAIN'S BEEN KIDNAPPED AND HIS CREW ARE TRYING TO RESCUE HIM, ONLY THEIR WEAPONS HAVE NO EFFECT, EVEN AT FULL POWER.
THING IS, THE PHASERS WORKED ALL ALONG, IT'S JUST THAT THE VILLAINS, WHO WERE *TELEPATHS,* WOULDN'T LET THE CREW SEE THAT.
MOST PERCEPTIVE, DOUGLAS.
WE, TOO, FACE A TELEPATH, JACK. AND HIS DOME REMAINS A BARRIER...
...ONLY IF WE LET IT.
OH.
OF ALL THE THINGS I HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED, THIS REMAINS THE MOST WONDROUS...
...AND MOST SAD.
WONDROUS BECAUSE OF THE MIND'S INFINITE POTENTIAL, SAD BECAUSE THAT POTENTIAL HAS FOR SO LONG REMAINED UNFULFILLED.
THE CORE OF A LIVING PERSON'S BEING, THE SEAT OF MEMORY AND AWARENESS--PERHAPS EVEN THE SOUL. HERE, AT LAST, I PRAY I SHALL FIND MY SON.

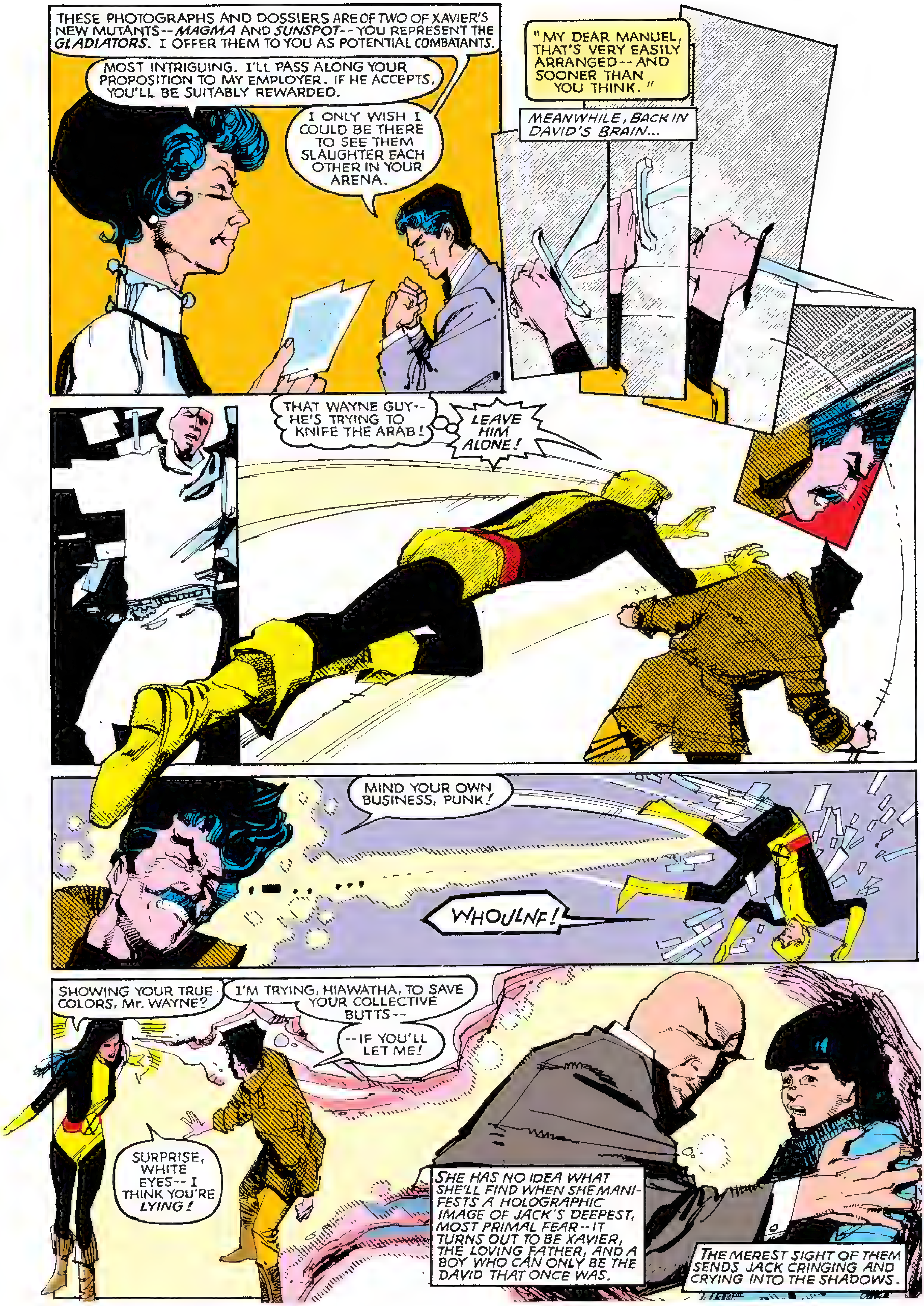

EACH CRYSTAL REPRESENTS A THOUGHT, A MEMORY. SOMEHOW, IN A WAY EVEN I DO NOT YET COMPREHEND, ENERGY STREAMS LINK THEM IN PATTERNS TO FORM CHAINS OF LOGIC OR EMOTION...
...INTERPRETATIONS OF REALITY, FLIGHTS OF FANCY.
BUT THERE ARE SO FEW-- THE CLUSTER SHOULD BE FAR LARGER AND MORE COMPLEX IN A BOY HIS AGE.
HIS MEMORIES-- HIS AWARENESS AS DAVID HALLER OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD-- ENDED WHEN HE WAS TRAUMATIZED.
SO MUCH PRECIOUS TIME-- AND OPPORTUNITY-- LOST, NEVER TO BE REGAINED.
HE WAS A *CHILD*-- WHY DID HE HAVE TO SUFFER, WHAT HAD HE EVER DONE TO DESERVE SUCH A FATE?!
NOT TOO SHABBY, CHARLES.
THIS WHERE CYNDI AN' I AN' THE OTHER PSI-SELVES ALL GONNA END UP, HEY?!
PLEASE BE CAREFUL-- BOTH THE CRYSTALS THEMSELVES AND THEIR LAYOUT ARE TERRIBLY FRAGILE.
ENOUGH DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE ALREADY, LET US NOT ADD TO IT.
DANI, I MUST TALK WITH YOU, USING OUR SPECIAL PSI-LINK!
SURE, RAHNE, WHAT'S UP?!
Mr. WAYNE -- I DINNA TRUST HIM.
ME, NEITHER-- GUESS WE CAN'T LIKE EVERYONE, KIDDO.
'TIS *MORE* THAN THAT! HE'S *WICKED*, DANI. HE MEANS US HARM!
IF THAT WERE TRUE, RAHNE, THE PROF'S POWERS WOULD HAVE TOLD HIM.
BUT SUPPOSE JACK'S FOOLING HIM-- C'MON, DANI, IS THAT POSSIBLE?! I MEAN, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *PROFESSOR XAVIER*, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
OKAY, HOTSHOT-- SUPPOSE THE PROF'S POWERS *AREN'T* WORKING RIGHT, WHAT THEN?!
WE COULD BE IN A *WHOLE* LOT OF TROUBLE.
HEADS UP, TROOPS-- THE ARAB'S CORNERED, THAT'S WHEN AN ANIMAL'S THE MOST DANGEROUS. HE'S GOT NOTHING MORE TO LOSE, NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
IT'S KILL OR BE KILLED.

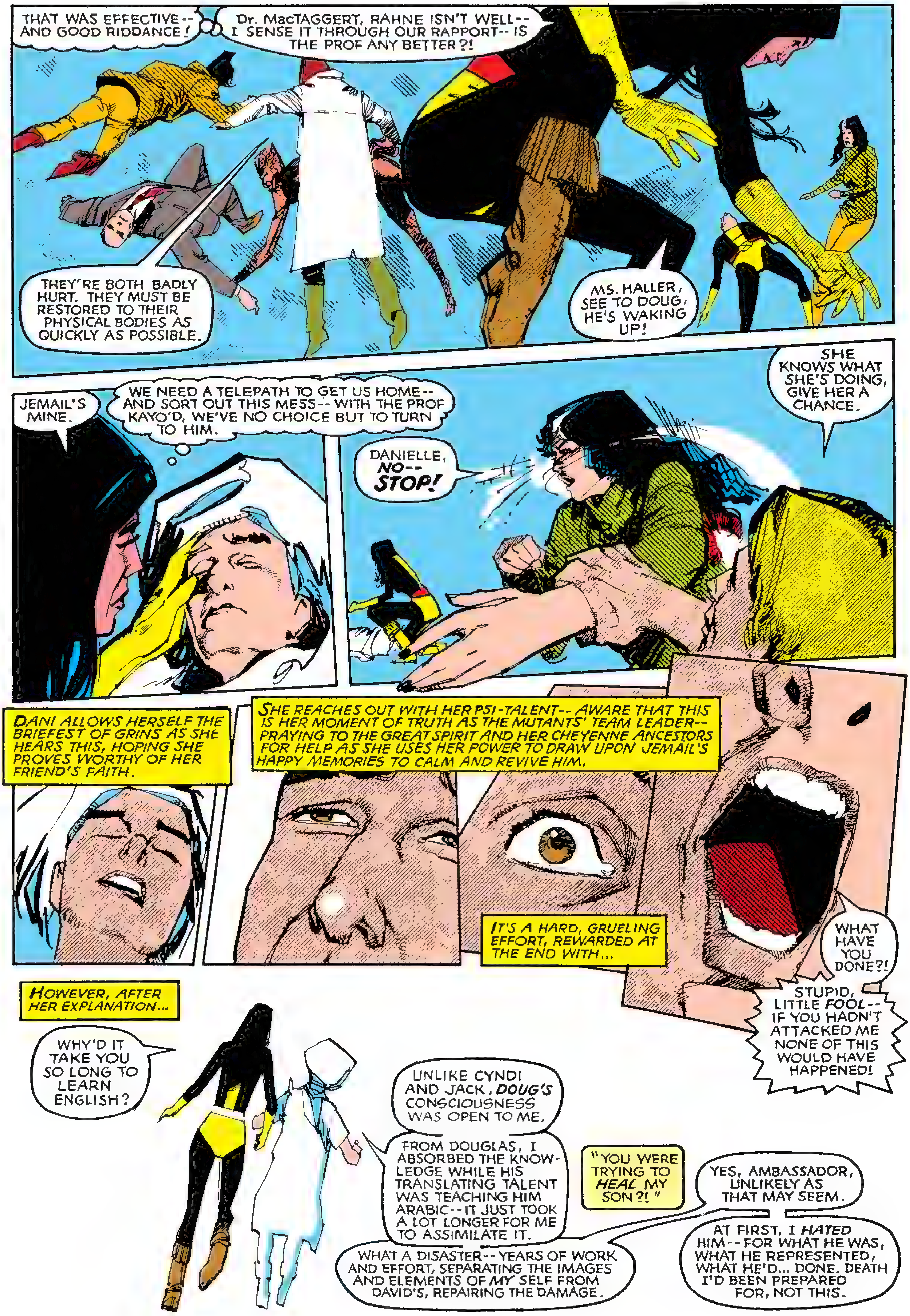

THAT IMAGE-- IT'S *ME!*
OH, CHARLES -- THE CRYSTAL RADIATES SUCH *LOVE--!*
"THE MIRACLE OF LIFE," XAVIER THINKS, WITH A MIX OF BITTER SADNESS, "BUT THE LOVE IS FOR *YOU,* GABRIELLE. DAVID'S MEMORIES ARE ALL OF *YOU.*
"WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME, WHY DID YOU KEEP HIM TO YOURSELF, DIDN'T I MATTER?! WHY COULDN'T YOU AT LEAST HAVE ALLOWED ME THE CHANCE, THE CHOICE, TO BE DAVID'S FATHER?! DID MY POWERS--MY BEING A MUTANT--HORRIFY YOU SO MUCH?!!"
I WONDER IF THE PROFESSOR COULD HELP ME WALK LIKE THIS THROUGH MY OWN HEAD, IT'D BE SO MARVELOUS TO VISIT MY MEMORIES OF MY GRANDFATHER. I MISS HIM SO MUCH, AND SOMETIMES, IT'S SO HARD TO REMEMBER.
BETTER GET MY MIND ON MY JOB OR THAT ARAB'LL SEE TO IT I END UP AS DEAD AS GRAN'PA. TROUBLE IS, THE MORE I WATCH JACK...
...THE MORE CONVINCED I BECOME THAT RAHNE'S RIGHT.
NO ONE'LL *EVER* BELIEVE *THIS!*
*Ehnh*--YOU SEEN ONE HEAD, YOU'VE SEEN 'EM ALL. DAVEYDOMEBOY'S NO BIG DEAL.
MINE'S A LOT MORE FUN.
GREAT.
WANNA PLAY THERE?
PROFESSOR!
THESE CRYSTALS ARE ALL *BROKEN!*
*OWW!*
THAT FLOATING SHARD SLICED RIGHT THROUGH MY UNIFORM!
BE CAREFUL, EVERYONE! THE LITTLE SUCKERS ARE *SHARP!*
THE ARAB'S DOING--HE'S TRYING TO DESTROY THE BOY'S CONSCIOUSNESS, SO HE CAN TAKE OVER.
PERHAPS, JACK--BUT I DOUBT IT, I THINK THIS WAS CAUSED BY THE INITIAL TRAUMA. WHAT'S STRANGE IS THAT MANY OF THESE CRYSTALS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN *REPAIRED.*

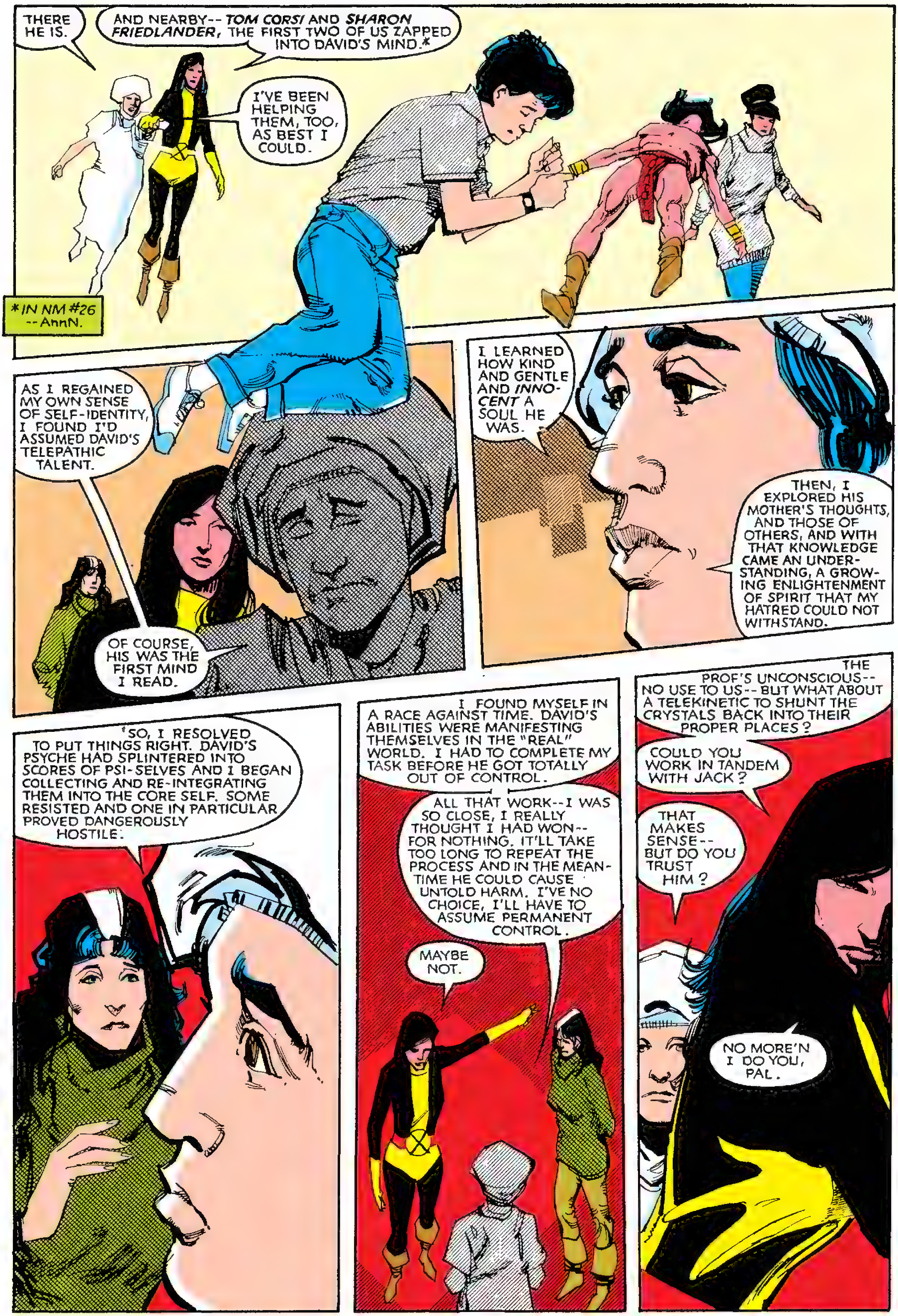

ONLY A *TELEPATH* COULD DO THAT, BUT THE ONLY SUCH PSI PRESENT IS *JEMAIL*, THE ARAB YOUTH. WHY WOULD HE TRY TO HEAL SOMEONE HE SUPPOSEDLY HATES?! WHY NOT SIMPLY DO WHAT JACK SAID...
...SHATTER ALL THE CRYSTALS AND REPLACE DAVID'S PSYCHE WITH HIS OWN?!
COULD I HAVE BEEN *WRONG* ABOUT THE LAD?!!
CHARLES-- **LOOK!!**
CASCADING OUT OF THE DARKNESS COMES ANOTHER CRYSTAL CLUSTER-- FAR LARGER AND MORE COMPLEX THAN DAVID'S-- IN THE CENTER OF WHICH IS THE SHRIEKING, FLAILING FORM OF **JEMAIL KARAMI**.
BEFORE ANYONE CAN REACT, THE TWO PSYCHIC BODIES CRASH TOGETHER. CRYSTALS ARE KNOCKED FROM THEIR NORMAL, SERENE ORBITS-- SOME ARE BROKEN, SPRAYING SHRAPNEL IN EVERY DIRECTION.
NONE SAVE JACK-- WHO, DANI NOTES GRIMLY, CHOOSES TO PROTECT HIMSELF ALONE WITH A TELEKINETIC FORCE FIELD-- ESCAPE UNSCATHED.
CYNDI TRIES TO TORCH THOSE PIECES HEADING HER WAY, TO NO AVAIL. HER FIERCEST FLAMES DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT. SHE'S NEVER BEEN HURT BEFORE, THE PAIN IS WORSE THAN ANYTHING SHE'S EVER EXPERIENCED AND SHE CAN'T HOLD BACK HER SCREAMS.
TO HIS AMAZEMENT, IGNORING HIS OWN WOUNDS, DOUG SPRINGS AT ONCE TO HER AID.
AT THE SAME TIME-- AS NEARBY AS SHE IS FAR AWAY-- GABRIELLE HALLER STUMBLES FACE-TO-FACE WITH A NIGHTMARE AS TERRIBLE AS ANY IN HER OWN TRAGIC, TORMENTED PAST.
SHE SEES HER HOME IN PARIS, THAT FATEFUL DAY NINE YEARS AGO...
...HER DEAREST FRIEND-- DAVID'S GODFATHER -- **DANIEL SHOMRON**...

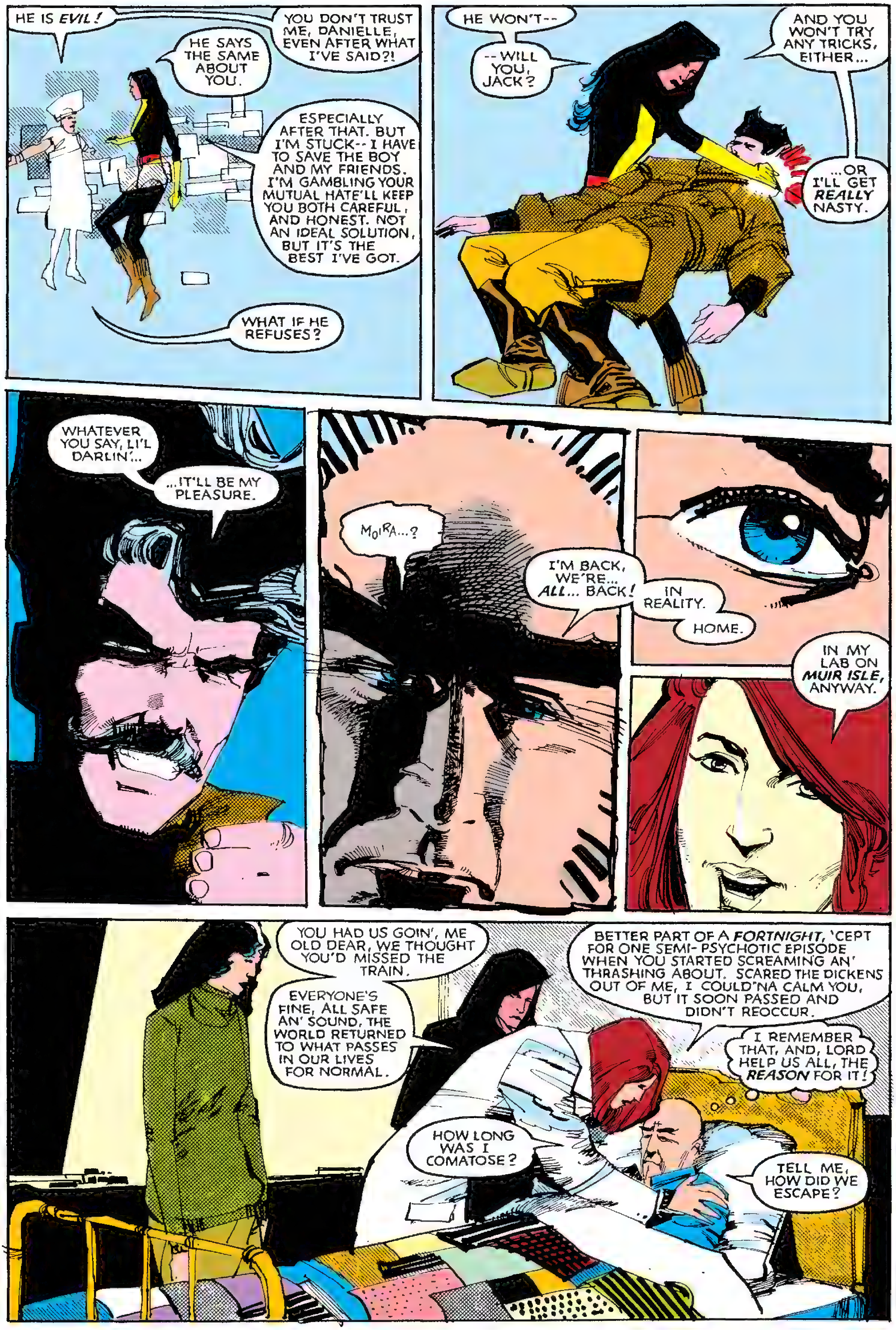

...AND JEMAIL'S ASSASSINATION TEAM...
...COME TO KILL EVERY ISRAELI THEY COULD FIND.
DANIEL DIED IMMEDIATELY, AND DAVID WOULD HAVE...
... HAD HIS TERROR NOT CATALYZED HIS LATENT PSI-POWERS.
IN A SPLIT-SECOND, DAVID INCINERATED THE BRAINS OF HIS WOULD-BE MURDERERS. BUT AS HE DID, HE ALSO-- FOR THAT INSTANT-- MERGED MINDS WITH EACH OF HIS VICTIMS, ACTUALLY BECAME THEM, FELT THEIR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS, AT THE MOMENT OF THEIR DEATHS.
THAT WAS THE TRAUMA WHICH SHATTERED HIS OWN PSYCHE-- A GENTLE, LOVING BOY FORCED SUDDENLY TO KILL-- AND INTO THAT VOID WAS SUCKED JEMAIL, SLAIN YET IMMEDIATELY REBORN.
FILTHY, STINKING ANIMAL--
--MAY GOD ROT YOUR BUTCHER'S SOUL!
GABY, NO!
KILL HIM, GABY!
IT'S WHAT YOU WANT-- WHAT HE DESERVES-- KILL THE ARAB!!
YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS!
LET ME GO!
NOBODY KILLS, NOBODY DIES, DO YOU HEAR?!
NOBODY!
CHARLES-- BEHIND YOU!

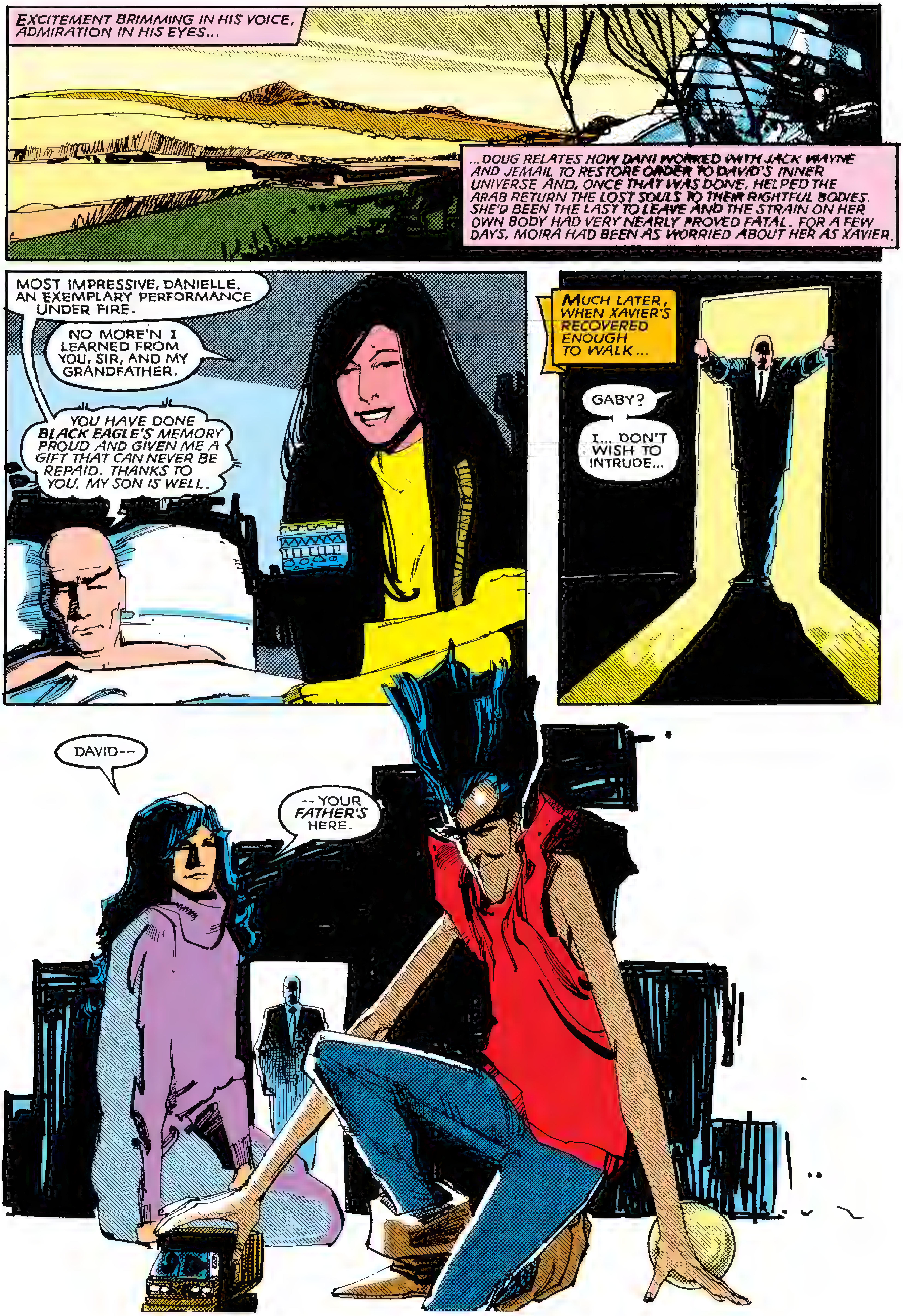

I'LL SAVE YOU, SIR!
AND THE PLUCKY SCOTS WEREWOLF DOES.
BUT, WITH XAVIER SEEMINGLY OUT OF HARM'S WAY, HE SCREAMS--
--AS IF MIND AND HEART AND SOUL WERE BEING RIPPED FROM HIM.
THAT TERRIBLE CRY FREEZES RAHNE IN HER TRACKS...
...AND SHE HAS NO CHANCE TO HELP HER TEACHER A SECOND TIME AS THE JAGGED CRYSTAL SWARM TWISTS AROUND IN MID-FLIGHT AND CRASHES INTO THEM.
CRASH
NOBODY LEFT BUT YOU AN' ME, BOY.
AN' THAT WON'T BE FOR LONG.
NEW YORK CITY--
--THE HELLFIRE CLUB...
YOU HAVE A REASON FOR THIS MEETING, Mr. De La ROCHA, BEYOND THE OBVIOUS?
MY TIME IS TOO VALUABLE TO WASTE WITH BOYS.
PEOPLE DO NOT ADDRESS ME IN SUCH A MANNER.
I KNOW. WITH YOUR EMPATHIC POWER--OH YES, MANUEL, I'M AWARE OF THAT LITTLE TALENT--YOU COULD MANIPULATE MY EMOTIONS TO MAKE ME FEEL ANYTHING.
BUT IT'S GONE, ISN'T IT? YOUR HEADMISTRESS--EMMA FROST, THE WHITE QUEEN--TOOK IT AWAY AND WON'T GIVE IT BACK UNTIL YOU PROVE YOU'LL BEHAVE YOURSELF.
I WANT REVENGE--AGAINST HER AND CHARLES XAVIER AS WELL!
THAT'S A PAIR OF VERY DANGEROUS ENEMIES.
NO LESS SO THAN I.

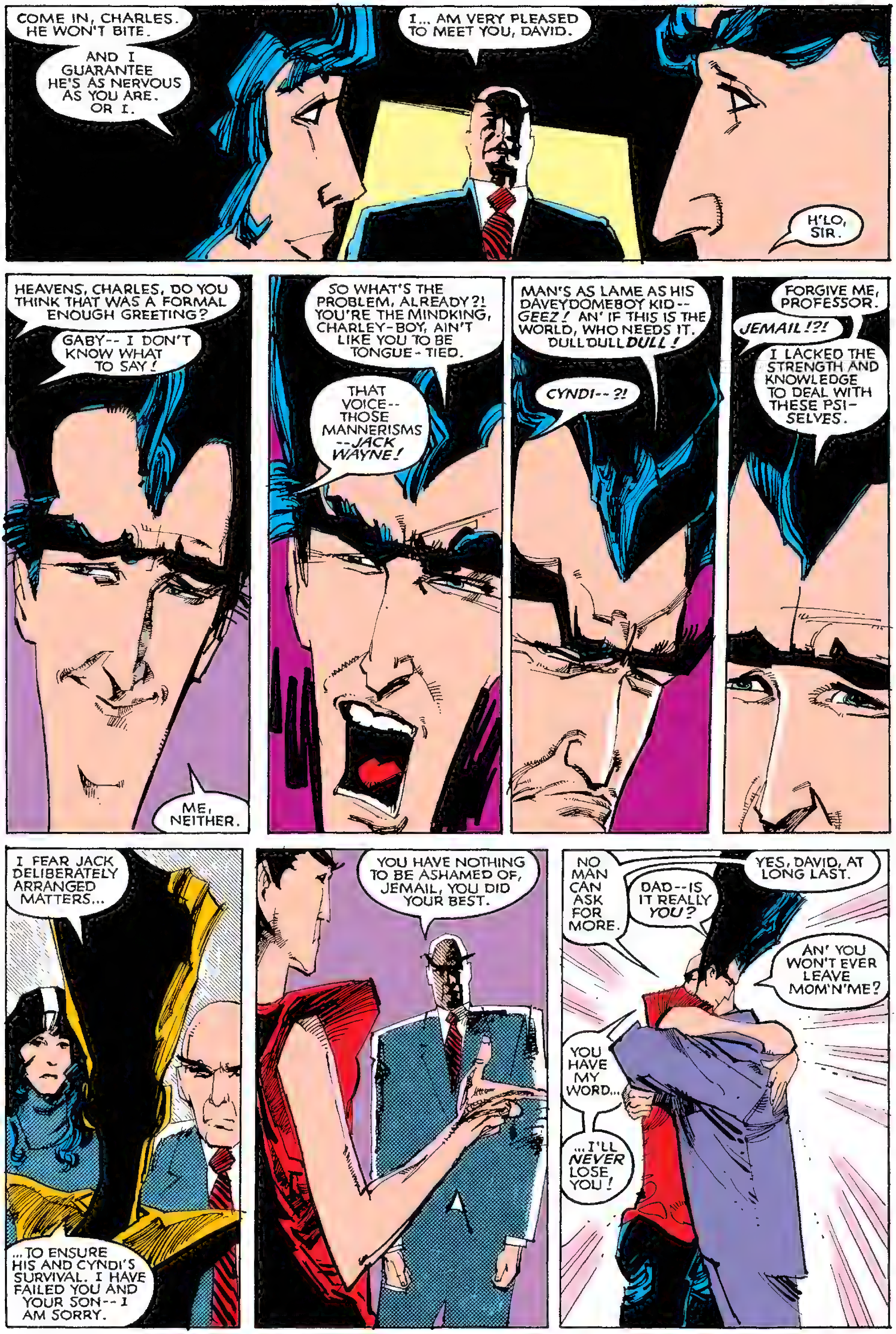

THESE PHOTOGRAPHS AND DOSSIERS ARE OF TWO OF XAVIER'S NEW MUTANTS--*MAGMA* AND *SUNSPOT*--YOU REPRESENT THE *GLADIATORS*. I OFFER THEM TO YOU AS POTENTIAL COMBATANTS.
MOST INTRIGUING. I'LL PASS ALONG YOUR PROPOSITION TO MY EMPLOYER. IF HE ACCEPTS, YOU'LL BE SUITABLY REWARDED.
I ONLY WISH I COULD BE THERE TO SEE THEM SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER IN YOUR ARENA.
"MY DEAR MANUEL, THAT'S VERY EASILY ARRANGED--AND SOONER THAN YOU THINK."
*MEANWHILE, BACK IN DAVID'S BRAIN...*
THAT WAYNE GUY--HE'S TRYING TO KNIFE THE ARAB!
*LEAVE HIM ALONE!*
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, PUNK!
WHOULNF!
SHOWING YOUR TRUE COLORS, Mr. WAYNE?
I'M TRYING, HIAWATHA, TO SAVE YOUR COLLECTIVE BUTTS--
--IF YOU'LL LET ME!
SURPRISE, WHITE EYES--I THINK YOU'RE *LYING!*
*SHE HAS NO IDEA WHAT SHE'LL FIND WHEN SHE MANIFESTS A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF JACK'S DEEPEST, MOST PRIMAL FEAR--IT TURNS OUT TO BE XAVIER, THE LOVING FATHER, AND A BOY WHO CAN ONLY BE THE DAVID THAT ONCE WAS.*
*THE MEREST SIGHT OF THEM SENDS JACK CRINGING AND CRYING INTO THE SHADOWS.*

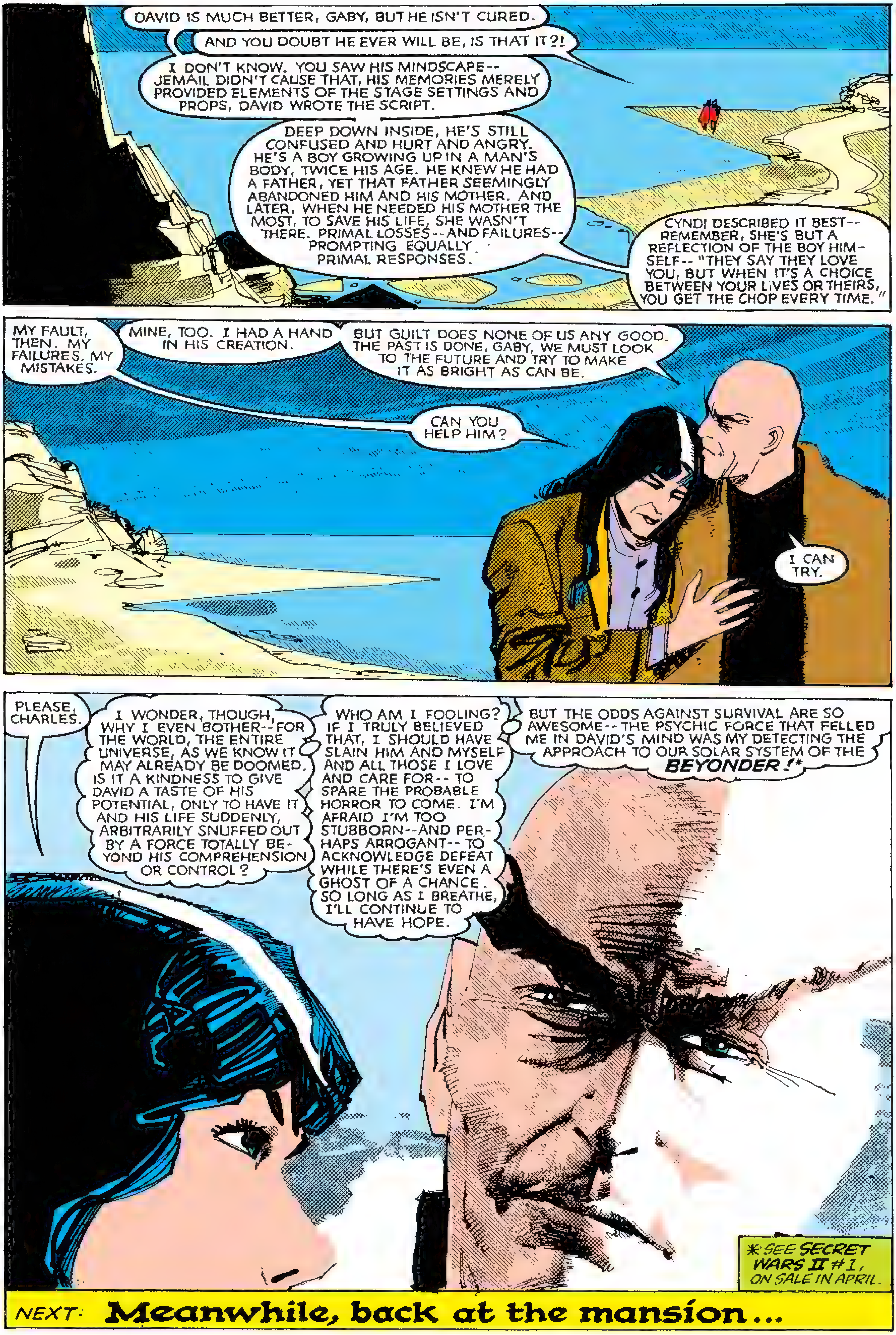

THAT WAS EFFECTIVE -- AND GOOD RIDDANCE!
Dr. MacTAGGERT, RAHNE ISN'T WELL -- I SENSE IT THROUGH OUR RAPPORT -- IS THE PROF ANY BETTER?!
THEY'RE BOTH BADLY HURT. THEY MUST BE RESTORED TO THEIR PHYSICAL BODIES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
MS. HALLER, SEE TO DOUG, HE'S WAKING UP!
JEMAIL'S MINE.
WE NEED A TELEPATH TO GET US HOME -- AND SORT OUT THIS MESS -- WITH THE PROF KAYO'D, WE'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO TURN TO HIM.
DANIELLE, NO -- STOP!
SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING, GIVE HER A CHANCE.
DANI ALLOWS HERSELF THE BRIEFEST OF GRINS AS SHE HEARS THIS, HOPING SHE PROVES WORTHY OF HER FRIEND'S FAITH.
SHE REACHES OUT WITH HER PSI-TALENT -- AWARE THAT THIS IS HER MOMENT OF TRUTH AS THE MUTANTS' TEAM LEADER -- PRAYING TO THE GREAT SPIRIT AND HER CHEYENNE ANCESTORS FOR HELP AS SHE USES HER POWER TO DRAW UPON JEMAIL'S HAPPY MEMORIES TO CALM AND REVIVE HIM.
IT'S A HARD, GRUELING EFFORT, REWARDED AT THE END WITH...
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
STUPID, LITTLE FOOL -- IF YOU HADN'T ATTACKED ME NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!
HOWEVER, AFTER HER EXPLANATION...
WHY'D IT TAKE YOU SO LONG TO LEARN ENGLISH?
UNLIKE CYNDI AND JACK, DOUG'S CONSCIOUSNESS WAS OPEN TO ME.
FROM DOUGLAS, I ABSORBED THE KNOWLEDGE WHILE HIS TRANSLATING TALENT WAS TEACHING HIM ARABIC -- IT JUST TOOK A LOT LONGER FOR ME TO ASSIMILATE IT.
WHAT A DISASTER -- YEARS OF WORK AND EFFORT, SEPARATING THE IMAGES AND ELEMENTS OF MY SELF FROM DAVID'S, REPAIRING THE DAMAGE.
"YOU WERE TRYING TO HEAL MY SON?!"
YES, AMBASSADOR, UNLIKELY AS THAT MAY SEEM.
AT FIRST, I HATED HIM -- FOR WHAT HE WAS, WHAT HE REPRESENTED, WHAT HE'D... DONE. DEATH I'D BEEN PREPARED FOR, NOT THIS.


THERE HE IS.
AND NEARBY-- *TOM CORSI* AND *SHARON FRIEDLANDER*, THE FIRST TWO OF US ZAPPED INTO DAVID'S MIND.*
I'VE BEEN HELPING THEM, TOO, AS BEST I COULD.
*IN NM #26 --AnnN.
AS I REGAINED MY OWN SENSE OF SELF-IDENTITY, I FOUND I'D ASSUMED DAVID'S TELEPATHIC TALENT.
OF COURSE, HIS WAS THE FIRST MIND I READ.
I LEARNED HOW KIND AND GENTLE AND *INNOCENT* A SOUL HE WAS.
THEN, I EXPLORED HIS MOTHER'S THOUGHTS, AND THOSE OF OTHERS, AND WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE CAME AN UNDERSTANDING, A GROWING ENLIGHTENMENT OF SPIRIT THAT MY HATRED COULD NOT WITHSTAND.
"SO, I RESOLVED TO PUT THINGS RIGHT. DAVID'S PSYCHE HAD SPLINTERED INTO SCORES OF PSI-SELVES AND I BEGAN COLLECTING AND RE-INTEGRATING THEM INTO THE CORE SELF. SOME RESISTED AND ONE IN PARTICULAR PROVED DANGEROUSLY HOSTILE.
I FOUND MYSELF IN A RACE AGAINST TIME. DAVID'S ABILITIES WERE MANIFESTING THEMSELVES IN THE "REAL" WORLD. I HAD TO COMPLETE MY TASK BEFORE HE GOT TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL.
ALL THAT WORK--I WAS SO CLOSE, I REALLY THOUGHT I HAD WON-- FOR NOTHING. IT'LL TAKE TOO LONG TO REPEAT THE PROCESS AND IN THE MEANTIME HE COULD CAUSE UNTOLD HARM. I'VE NO CHOICE, I'LL HAVE TO ASSUME PERMANENT CONTROL.
MAYBE NOT.
THE PROF'S UNCONSCIOUS-- NO USE TO US-- BUT WHAT ABOUT A TELEKINETIC TO SHUNT THE CRYSTALS BACK INTO THEIR PROPER PLACES?
COULD YOU WORK IN TANDEM WITH JACK?
THAT MAKES SENSE-- BUT DO YOU TRUST HIM?
NO MORE'N I DO YOU, PAL.


HE IS *EVIL!*
YOU DON'T TRUST ME, DANIELLE, EVEN AFTER WHAT I'VE SAID?!
HE SAYS THE SAME ABOUT YOU.
ESPECIALLY AFTER THAT. BUT I'M STUCK-- I HAVE TO SAVE THE BOY AND MY FRIENDS. I'M GAMBLING YOUR MUTUAL HATE'LL KEEP YOU BOTH CAREFUL, AND HONEST. NOT AN IDEAL SOLUTION, BUT IT'S THE BEST I'VE GOT.
WHAT IF HE REFUSES?
HE WON'T--
--WILL YOU, JACK?
AND YOU WON'T TRY ANY TRICKS, EITHER...
...OR I'LL GET ***REALLY*** NASTY.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, LI'L DARLIN'...
...IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE.
MOIRA...?
I'M BACK, WE'RE... ***ALL***... BACK!
IN REALITY.
HOME.
IN MY LAB ON ***MUIR ISLE,*** ANYWAY.
YOU HAD US GOIN', ME OLD DEAR, WE THOUGHT YOU'D MISSED THE TRAIN.
EVERYONE'S FINE, ALL SAFE AN' SOUND, THE WORLD RETURNED TO WHAT PASSES IN OUR LIVES FOR NORMAL.
HOW LONG WAS I COMATOSE?
BETTER PART OF A ***FORTNIGHT,*** 'CEPT FOR ONE SEMI-PSYCHOTIC EPISODE WHEN YOU STARTED SCREAMING AN' THRASHING ABOUT. SCARED THE DICKENS OUT OF ME, I COULD'NA CALM YOU, BUT IT SOON PASSED AND DIDN'T REOCCUR.
I REMEMBER THAT, AND, LORD HELP US ALL, THE ***REASON*** FOR IT!
TELL ME, HOW DID WE ESCAPE?


EXCITEMENT BRIMMING IN HIS VOICE, ADMIRATION IN HIS EYES...
...DOUG RELATES HOW DANI WORKED WITH JACK WAYNE AND JEMAIL TO RESTORE ORDER TO DAVID'S INNER UNIVERSE AND, ONCE THAT WAS DONE, HELPED THE ARAB RETURN THE LOST SOULS TO THEIR RIGHTFUL BODIES. SHE'D BEEN THE LAST TO LEAVE AND THE STRAIN ON HER OWN BODY HAD VERY NEARLY PROVED FATAL. FOR A FEW DAYS, MOIRA HAD BEEN AS WORRIED ABOUT HER AS XAVIER.
MOST IMPRESSIVE, DANIELLE. AN EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE UNDER FIRE.
NO MORE'N I LEARNED FROM YOU, SIR, AND MY GRANDFATHER.
YOU HAVE DONE BLACK EAGLE'S MEMORY PROUD AND GIVEN ME A GIFT THAT CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THANKS TO YOU, MY SON IS WELL.
MUCH LATER, WHEN XAVIER'S RECOVERED ENOUGH TO WALK...
GABY?
I... DON'T WISH TO INTRUDE...
DAVID--
--YOUR FATHER'S HERE.


COME IN, CHARLES. HE WON'T BITE.
AND I GUARANTEE HE'S AS NERVOUS AS YOU ARE. OR I.
I... AM VERY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, DAVID.
H'LO, SIR.
HEAVENS, CHARLES, DO YOU THINK THAT WAS A FORMAL ENOUGH GREETING?
GABY-- I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!
ME, NEITHER.
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, ALREADY?! YOU'RE THE MINDKING, CHARLEY-BOY, AIN'T LIKE YOU TO BE TONGUE-TIED.
THAT VOICE-- THOSE MANNERISMS --JACK WAYNE!
MAN'S AS LAME AS HIS DAVEYDOMEBOY KID-- GEEZ! AN' IF THIS IS THE WORLD, WHO NEEDS IT. DULL DULL DULL!
CYNDI-- ?!
FORGIVE ME, PROFESSOR.
JEMAIL!?!
I LACKED THE STRENGTH AND KNOWLEDGE TO DEAL WITH THESE PSI-SELVES.
I FEAR JACK DELIBERATELY ARRANGED MATTERS...
...TO ENSURE HIS AND CYNDI'S SURVIVAL. I HAVE FAILED YOU AND YOUR SON-- I AM SORRY.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF, JEMAIL, YOU DID YOUR BEST.
NO MAN CAN ASK FOR MORE.
DAD--IS IT REALLY YOU?
YES, DAVID, AT LONG LAST.
AN' YOU WON'T EVER LEAVE MOM'N'ME?
YOU HAVE MY WORD...
...I'LL NEVER LOSE YOU!


DAVID IS MUCH BETTER, GABY, BUT HE ISN'T CURED.
AND YOU DOUBT HE EVER WILL BE, IS THAT IT?!
I DON'T KNOW. YOU SAW HIS MINDSCAPE-- JEMAIL DIDN'T CAUSE THAT, HIS MEMORIES MERELY PROVIDED ELEMENTS OF THE STAGE SETTINGS AND PROPS, DAVID WROTE THE SCRIPT.
DEEP DOWN INSIDE, HE'S STILL CONFUSED AND HURT AND ANGRY. HE'S A BOY GROWING UP IN A MAN'S BODY, TWICE HIS AGE. HE KNEW HE HAD A FATHER, YET THAT FATHER SEEMINGLY ABANDONED HIM AND HIS MOTHER. AND LATER, WHEN HE NEEDED HIS MOTHER THE MOST, TO SAVE HIS LIFE, SHE WASN'T THERE. PRIMAL LOSSES--AND FAILURES-- PROMPTING EQUALLY PRIMAL RESPONSES.
CYNDI DESCRIBED IT BEST-- REMEMBER, SHE'S BUT A REFLECTION OF THE BOY HIMSELF-- "THEY SAY THEY LOVE YOU, BUT WHEN IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN YOUR LIVES OR THEIRS, YOU GET THE CHOP EVERY TIME."
MY FAULT, THEN. MY FAILURES. MY MISTAKES.
MINE, TOO. I HAD A HAND IN HIS CREATION.
BUT GUILT DOES NONE OF US ANY GOOD. THE PAST IS DONE, GABY, WE MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE AND TRY TO MAKE IT AS BRIGHT AS CAN BE.
CAN YOU HELP HIM?
I CAN TRY.
PLEASE, CHARLES.
I WONDER, THOUGH, WHY I EVEN BOTHER--FOR THE WORLD, THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE, AS WE KNOW IT MAY ALREADY BE DOOMED. IS IT A KINDNESS TO GIVE DAVID A TASTE OF HIS POTENTIAL, ONLY TO HAVE IT AND HIS LIFE SUDDENLY, ARBITRARILY SNUFFED OUT BY A FORCE TOTALLY BEYOND HIS COMPREHENSION OR CONTROL?
WHO AM I FOOLING? IF I TRULY BELIEVED THAT, I SHOULD HAVE SLAIN HIM AND MYSELF AND ALL THOSE I LOVE AND CARE FOR-- TO SPARE THE PROBABLE HORROR TO COME. I'M AFRAID I'M TOO STUBBORN--AND PERHAPS ARROGANT-- TO ACKNOWLEDGE DEFEAT WHILE THERE'S EVEN A GHOST OF A CHANCE. SO LONG AS I BREATHE, I'LL CONTINUE TO HAVE HOPE.
BUT THE ODDS AGAINST SURVIVAL ARE SO AWESOME-- THE PSYCHIC FORCE THAT FELLED ME IN DAVID'S MIND WAS MY DETECTING THE APPROACH TO OUR SOLAR SYSTEM OF THE BEYONDER!*
*SEE SECRET WARS II #1, ON SALE IN APRIL.
NEXT: Meanwhile, back at the mansion...

*NEW MUTANTS #27-29* & *#31* COVER PAINTINGS BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

MARVEL®
TM
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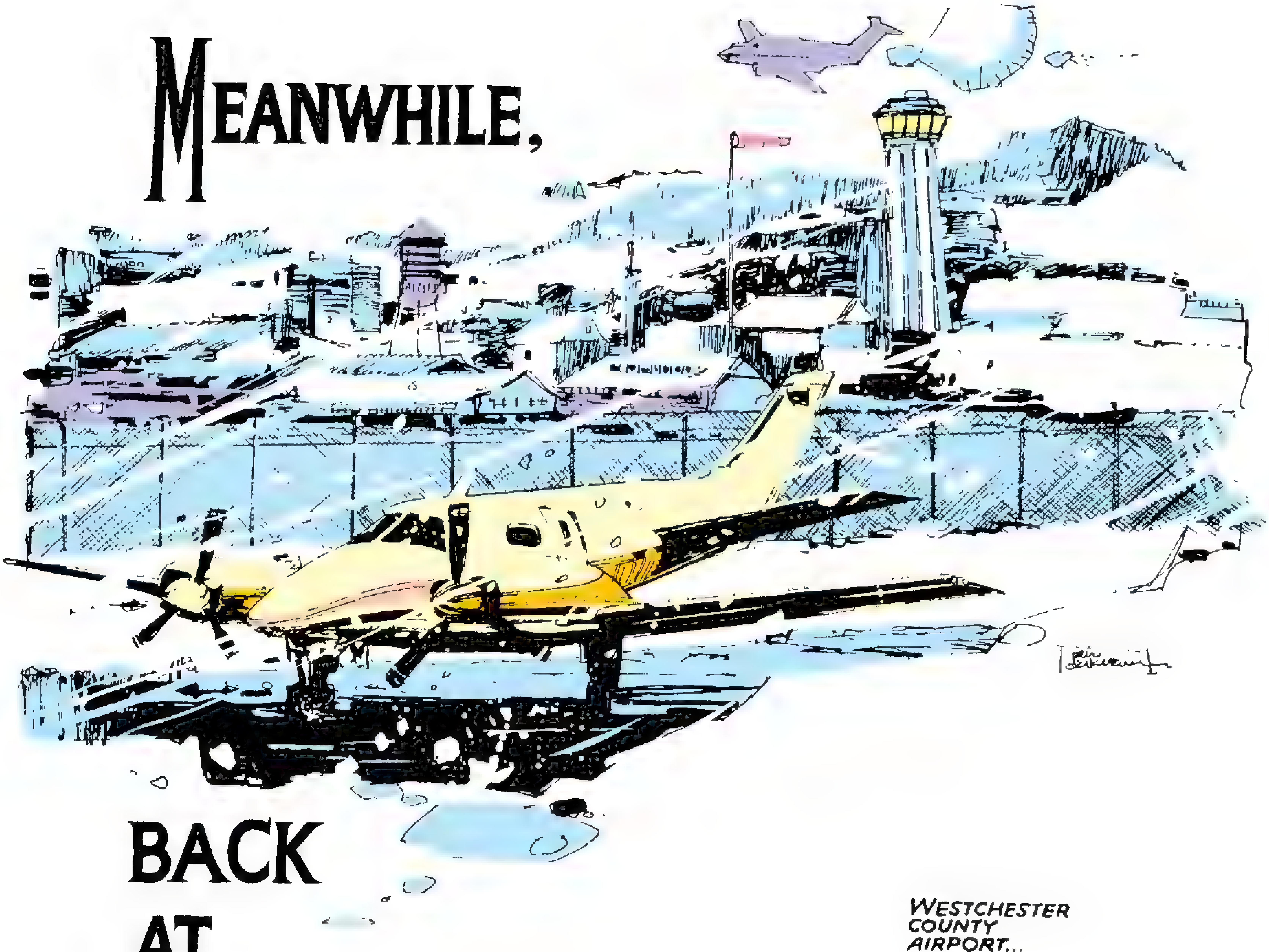
THE · NEW
MUTANTS™
29
JULY
CC 02207
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SUNSPOT
vs. the
GLADIATORS
to the
DEATH!

# MEANWHILE,



# BACK AT THE MANSION...

WESTCHESTER COUNTY AIRPORT...

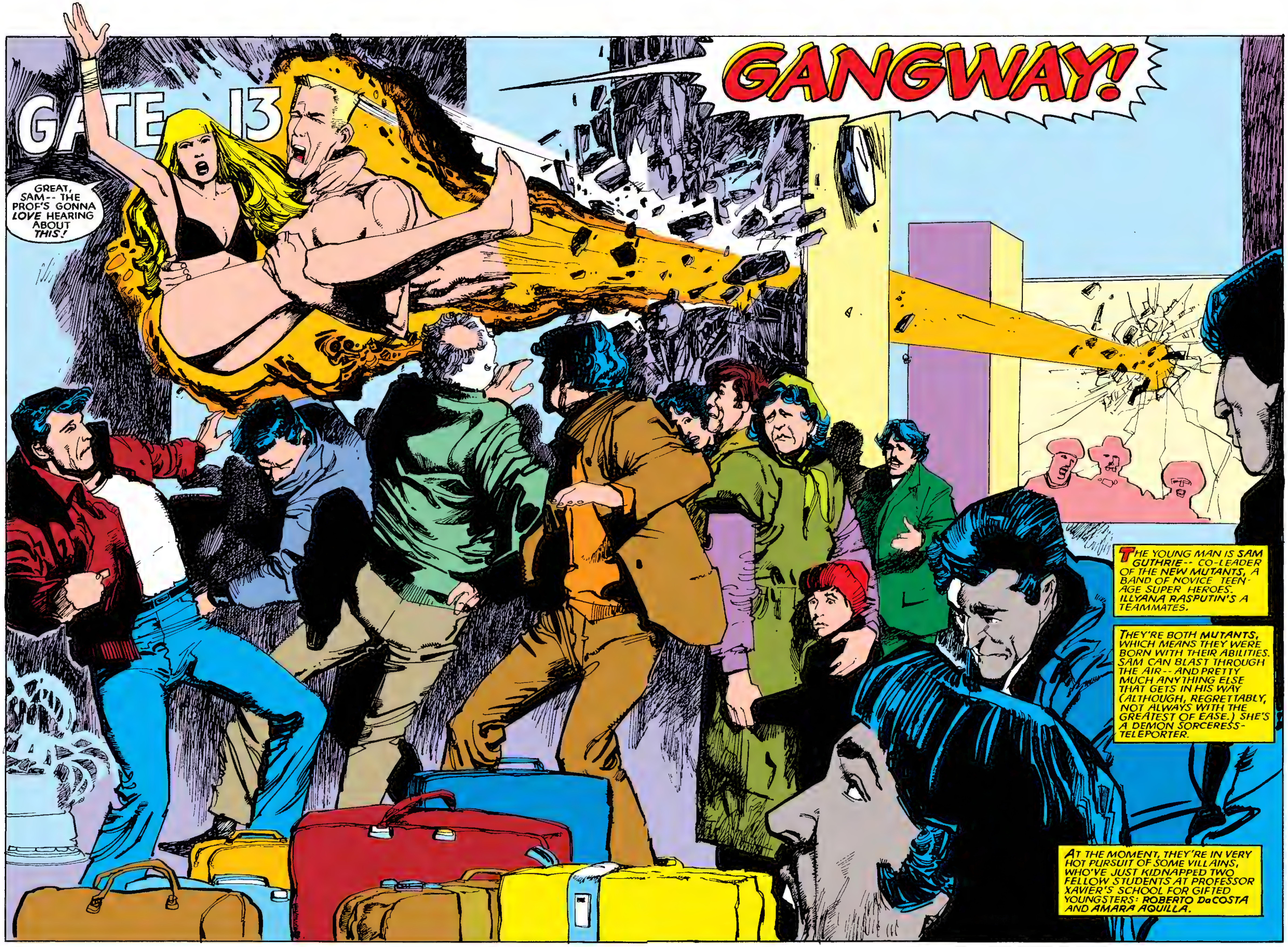
...ON A QUIET WINTER'S MORNING, WHEN A MILD, ON-GOING SNOWFALL HAS CUT BACK FLIGHT OPERATIONS TO A MINIMUM AND THOSE PILOTS AND PASSENGERS WHO HAVEN'T HEADED HOME -- ON HEARING THE WEATHER FORECAST THAT THIS STORM IS EXPECTED TO WORSEN INTO A BLIZZARD--

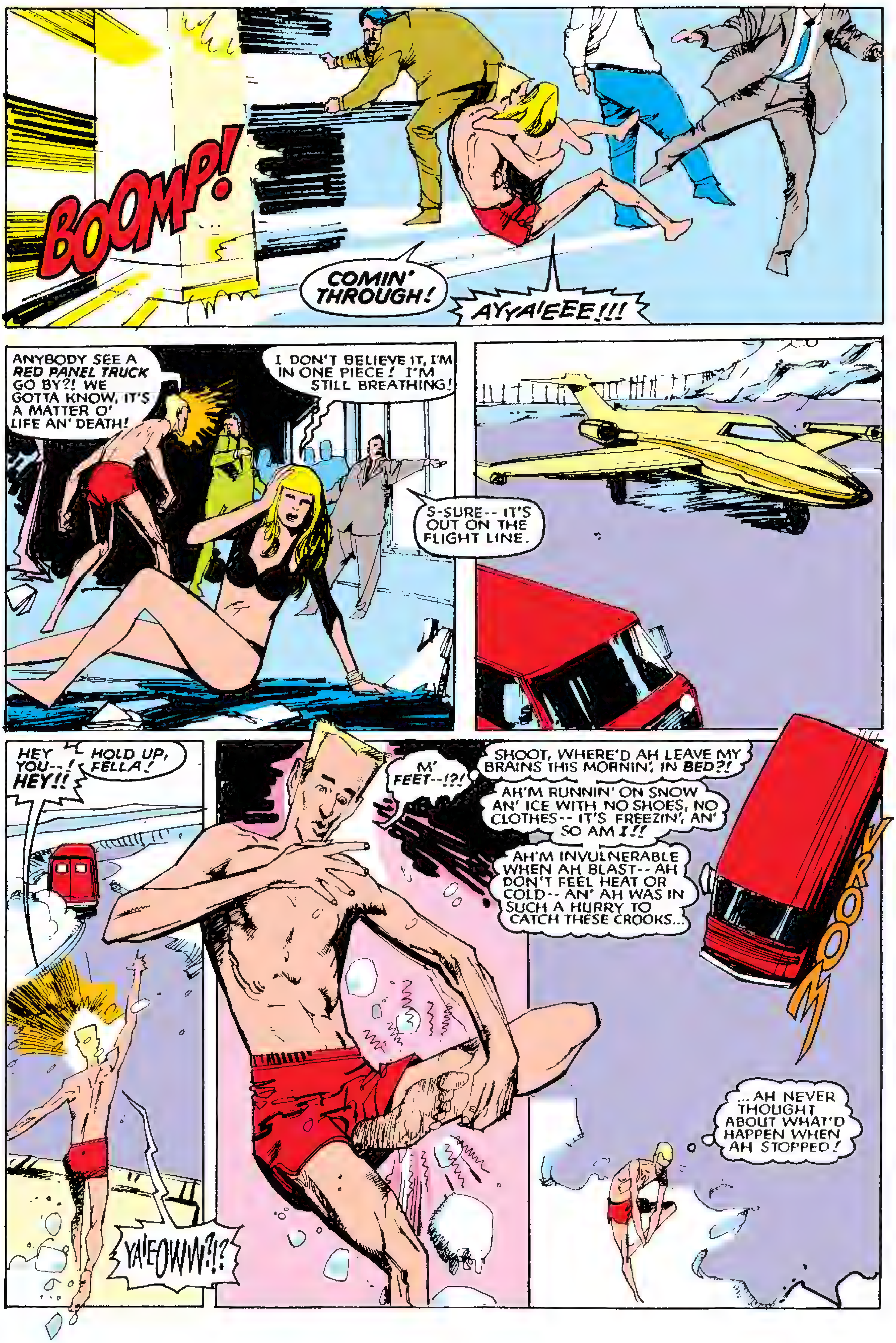
--HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN **WINGS OF WESTCHESTER**, THE TERMINAL LOUNGE, TO TALK SHOP AND SPIN EVER MORE OUTRAGEOUS YARNS OVER HOT SPICED CIDER OR HOTTER, SPICIER TODDIES.

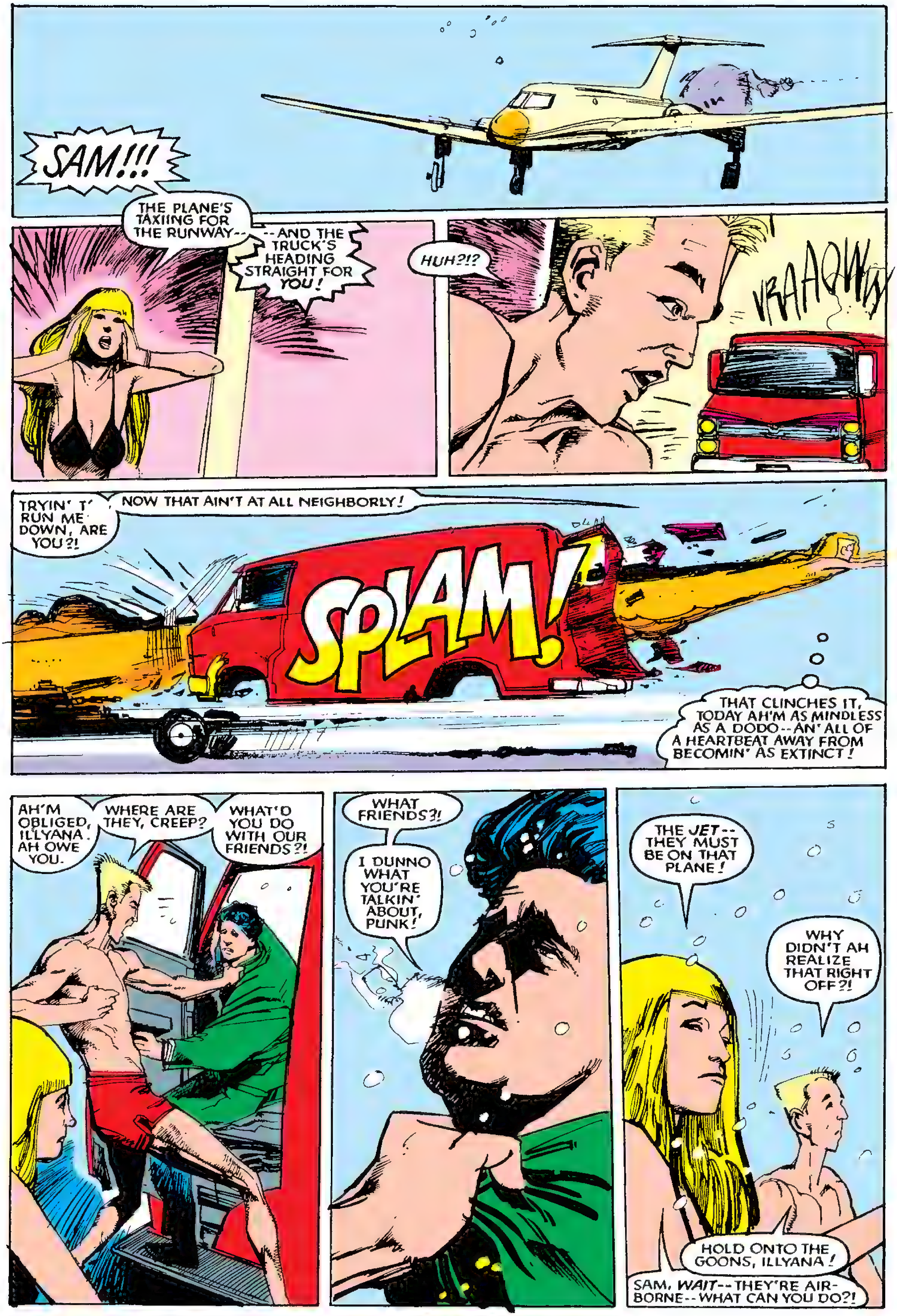
BUT THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, AMIDST THE HUSTLING, BUSTLING LAUGHTER AND GOOD CHEER...

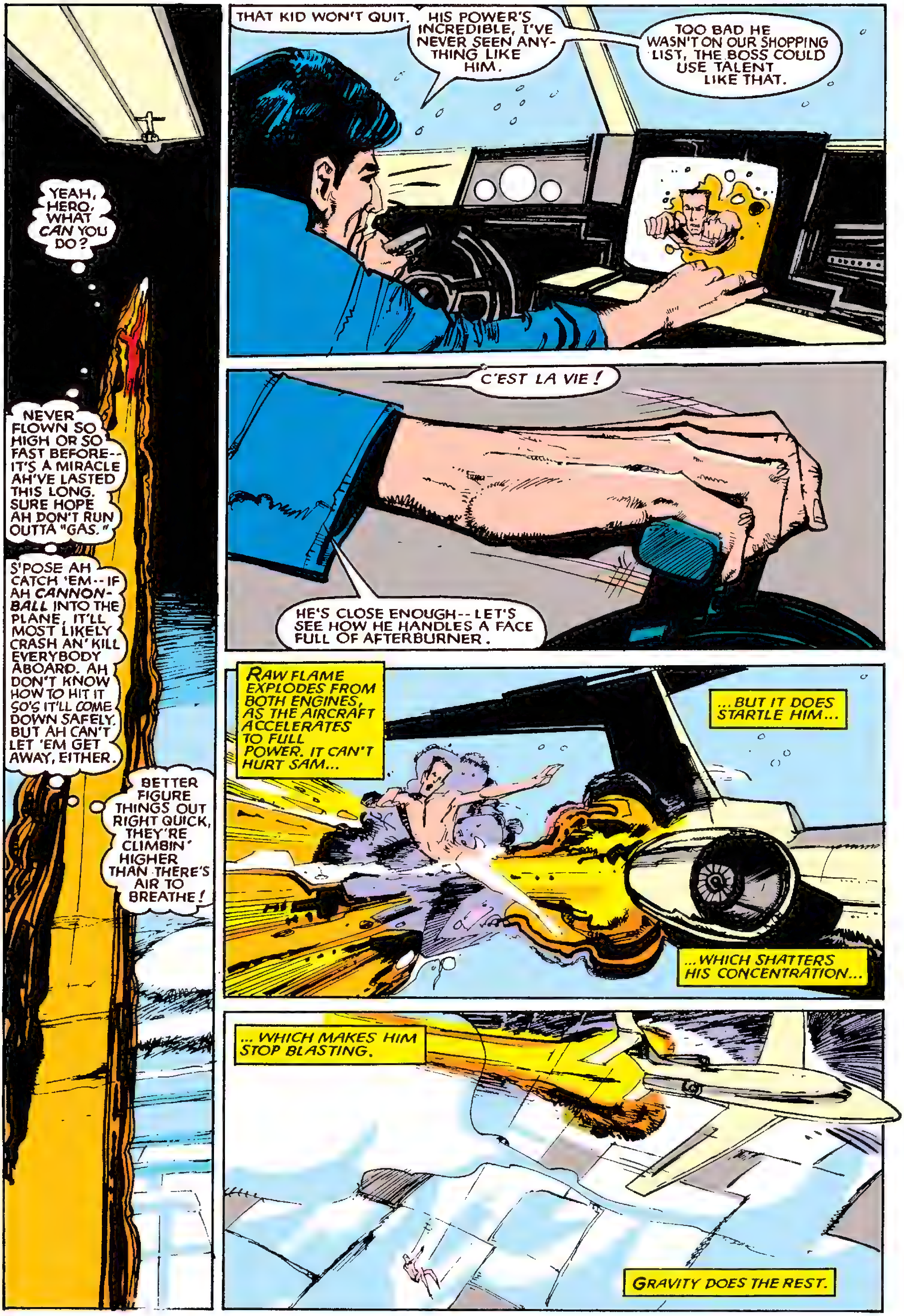
**CHRIS CLAREMONT**
*WRITER*
**BILL SIENKIEWICZ**
*ARTIST*
ORZECHOWSKI & ROSEN
*LETTERERS*
GLYNIS OLIVER
*COLORIST*
ANN NOCENTI
*EDITOR*
JIM SHOOTER
*EDITOR IN CHIEF*

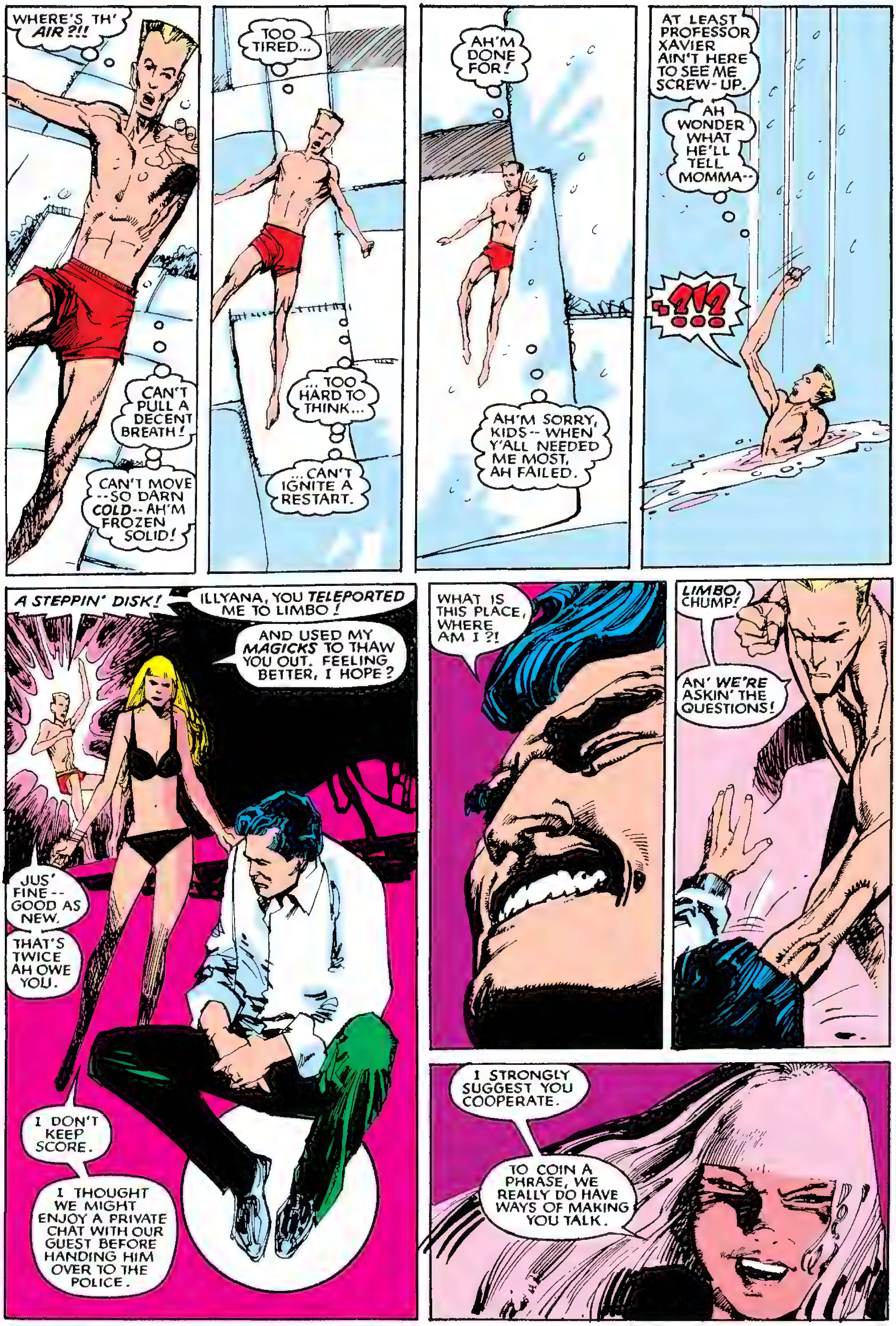
A **STAN LEE** PRESENTATION--
STARRING THE
**NEW MUTANTS**

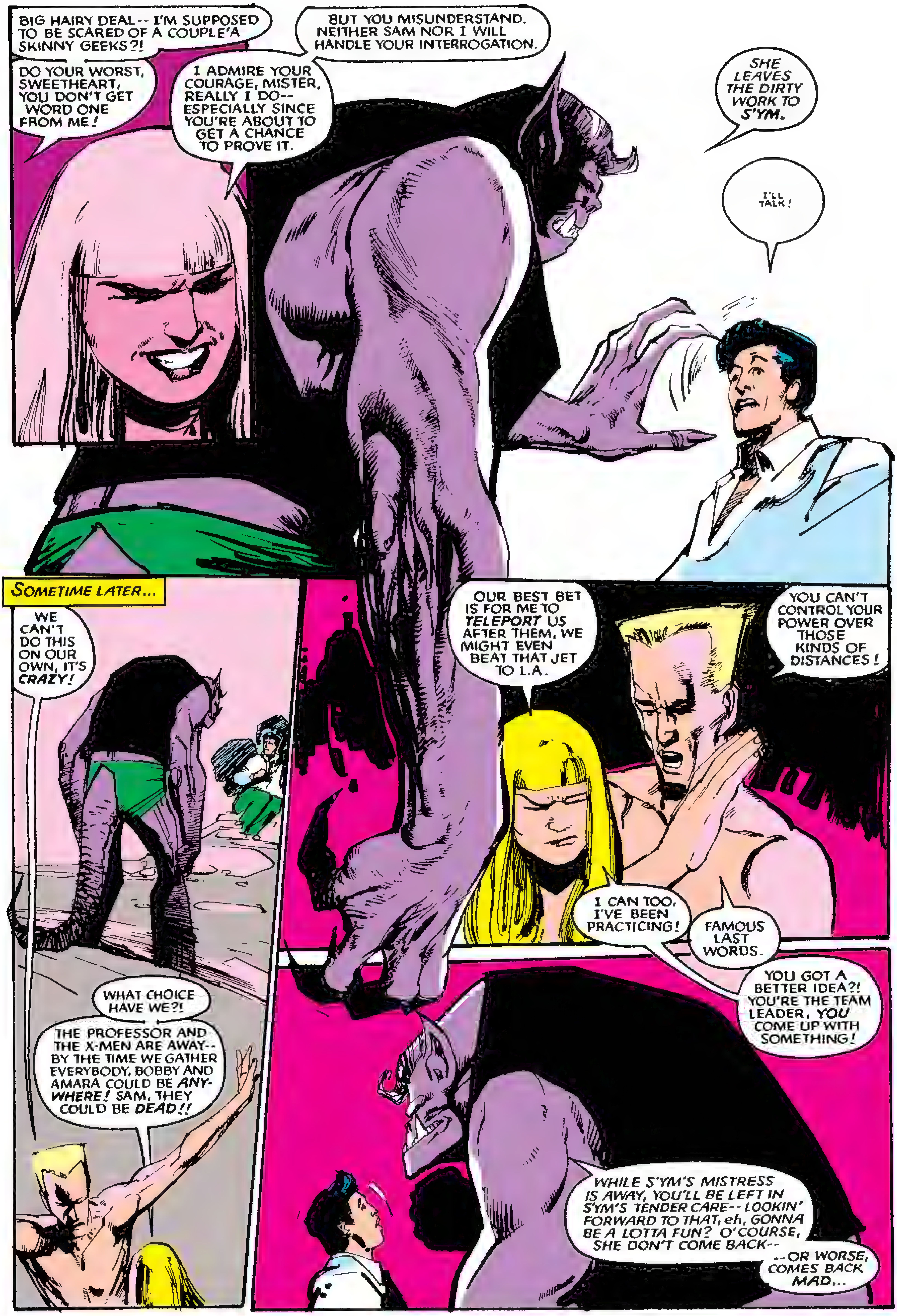

GATE 13
GANGWAY!
GREAT, SAM-- THE PROF'S GONNA LOVE HEARING ABOUT THIS!
THE YOUNG MAN IS SAM GUTHRIE-- CO-LEADER OF THE NEW MUTANTS, A BAND OF NOVICE TEEN-AGE SUPER HEROES. ILLYANA RASPUTIN'S A TEAMMATES.
THEY'RE BOTH MUTANTS, WHICH MEANS THEY WERE BORN WITH THEIR ABILITIES. SAM CAN BLAST THROUGH THE AIR-- AND PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING ELSE THAT GETS IN HIS WAY (ALTHOUGH, REGRETTABLY, NOT ALWAYS WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE.) SHE'S A DEMON SORCERESS-TELEPORTER.
AT THE MOMENT, THEY'RE IN VERY HOT PURSUIT OF SOME VILLAINS, WHO'VE JUST KIDNAPPED TWO FELLOW STUDENTS AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS: ROBERTO DaCOSTA AND AMARA AQUILLA.

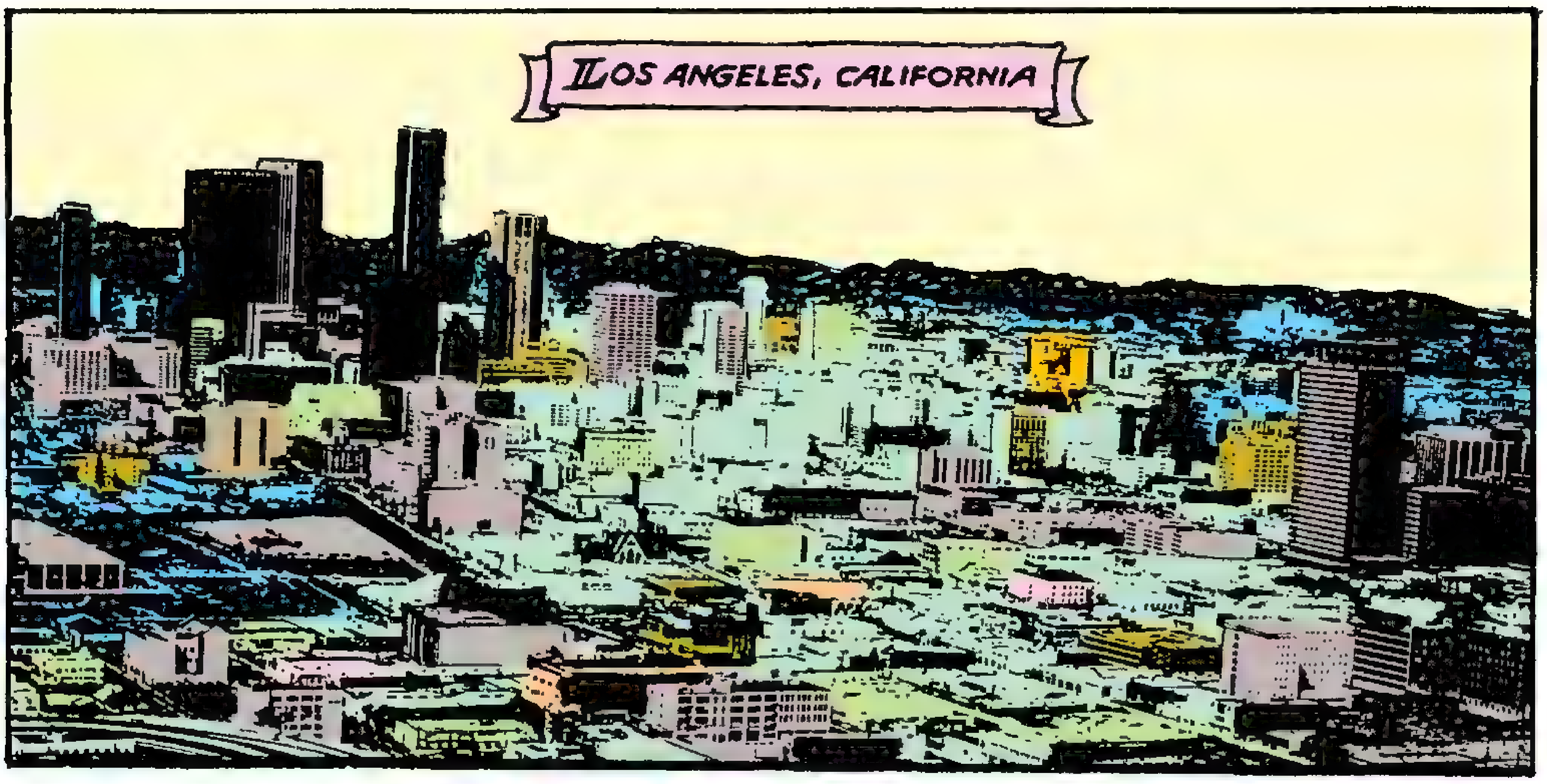

BOOMP!
COMIN' THROUGH!
AYYAIEEE!!!
ANYBODY SEE A RED PANEL TRUCK GO BY?! WE GOTTA KNOW, IT'S A MATTER O' LIFE AN' DEATH!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT, I'M IN ONE PIECE! I'M STILL BREATHING!
S-SURE-- IT'S OUT ON THE FLIGHT LINE.
HEY YOU--! HEY!!
HOLD UP, FELLA!
YAIEOWW?!?
M' FEET--!?!
SHOOT, WHERE'D AH LEAVE MY BRAINS THIS MORNIN', IN BED?!
AH'M RUNNIN' ON SNOW AN' ICE WITH NO SHOES, NO CLOTHES-- IT'S FREEZIN', AN' SO AM I!!
AH'M INVULNERABLE WHEN AH BLAST-- AH DON'T FEEL HEAT OR COLD-- AN' AH WAS IN SUCH A HURRY TO CATCH THESE CROOKS...
VROOOM
...AH NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT'D HAPPEN WHEN AH STOPPED!

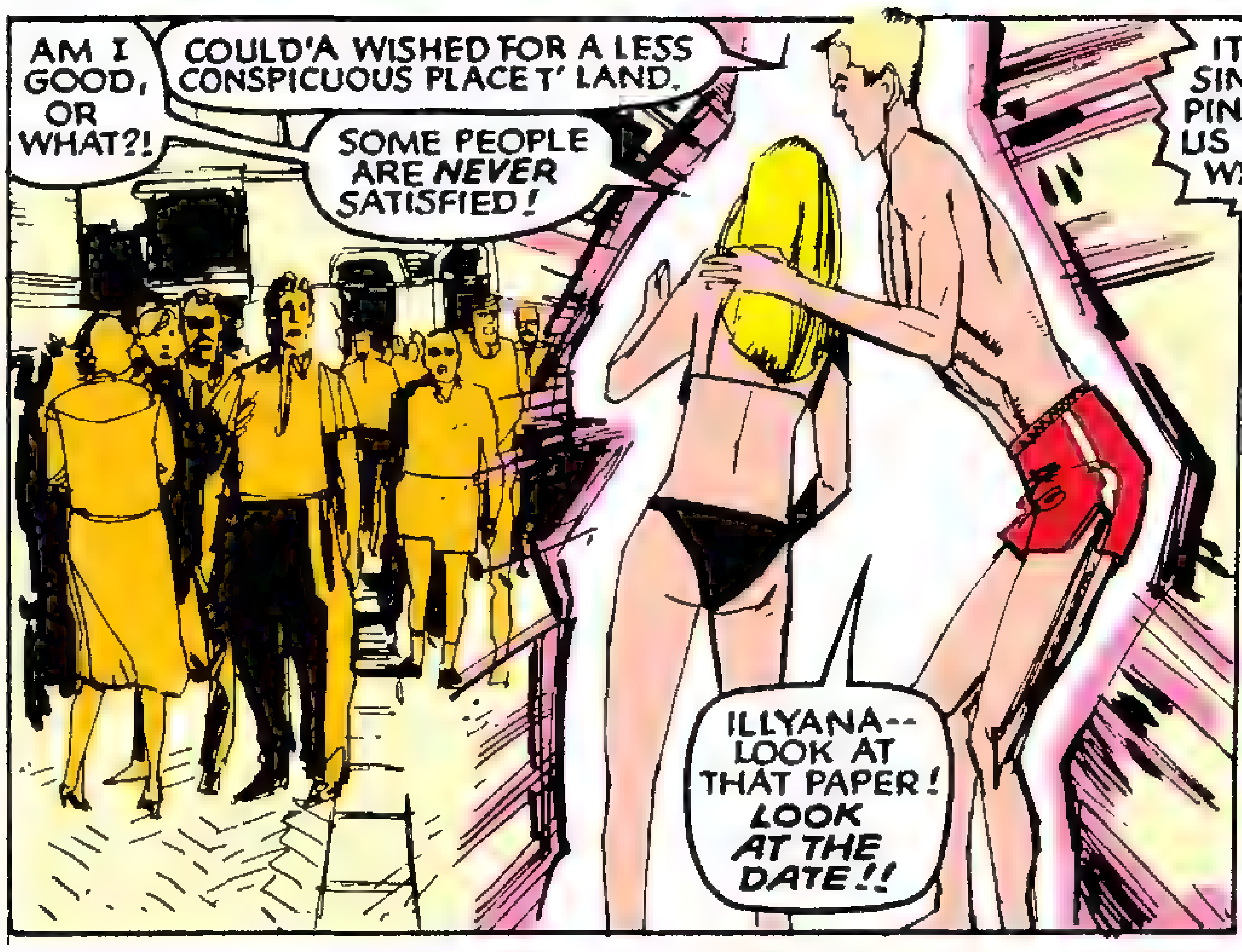

SAM!!!
THE PLANE'S TAXIING FOR THE RUNWAY--
--AND THE TRUCK'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR *YOU!*
HUH?!?
VRAAOWW
TRYIN' T' RUN ME DOWN, ARE YOU?!
NOW THAT AIN'T AT ALL NEIGHBORLY!
SPLAM!
THAT CLINCHES IT, TODAY AH'M AS MINDLESS AS A DODO--AN' ALL OF A HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM BECOMIN' AS EXTINCT!
AH'M OBLIGED, ILLYANA. AH OWE YOU.
WHERE ARE THEY, CREEP?
WHAT'D YOU DO WITH OUR FRIENDS?!
WHAT FRIENDS?!
I DUNNO WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, PUNK!
THE *JET*--THEY MUST BE ON THAT PLANE!
WHY DIDN'T AH REALIZE THAT RIGHT OFF?!
HOLD ONTO THE GOONS, ILLYANA!
SAM, *WAIT*--THEY'RE AIRBORNE--WHAT CAN YOU DO?!

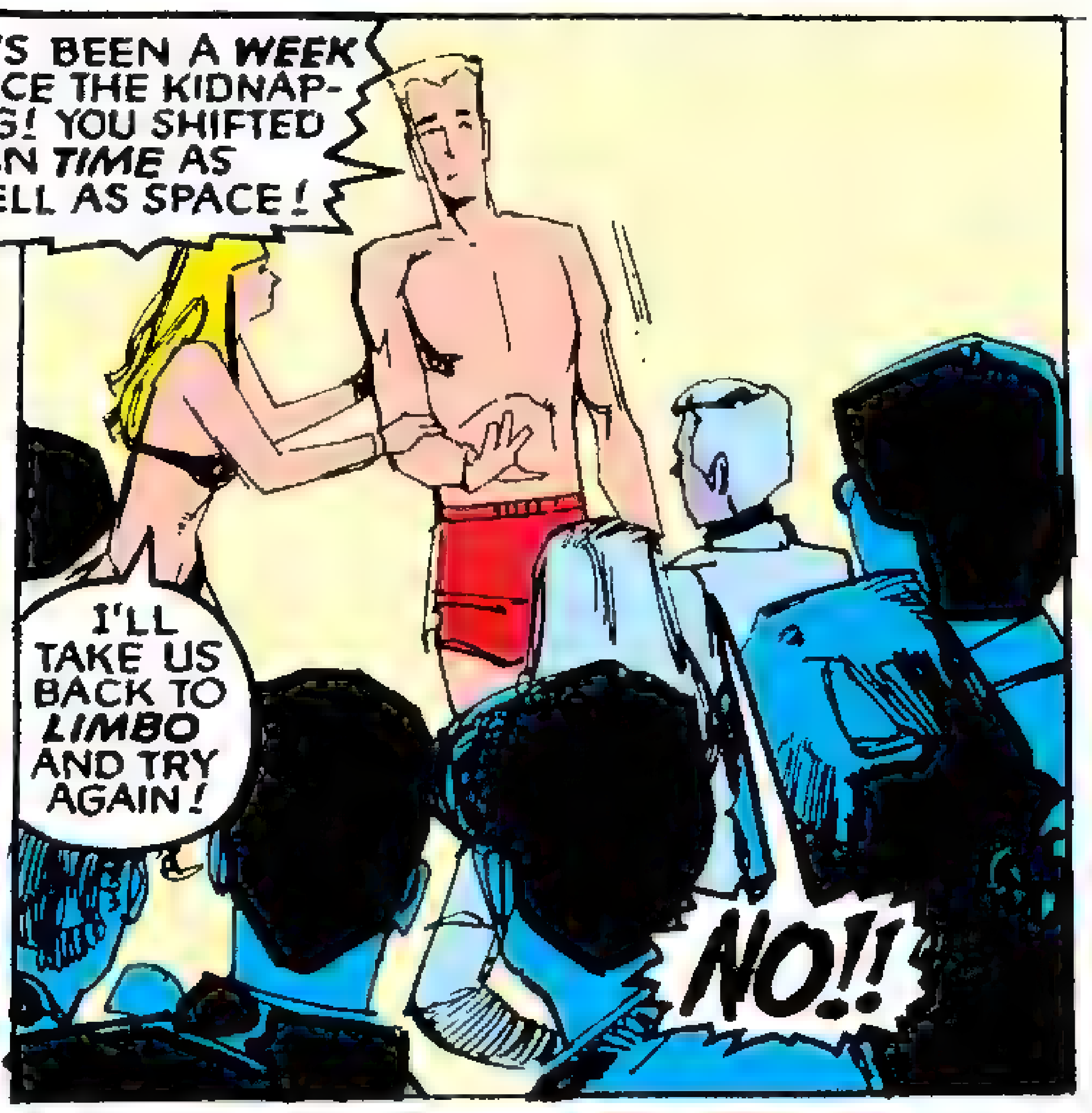

YEAH, HERO, WHAT *CAN* YOU DO?
NEVER FLOWN SO HIGH OR SO FAST BEFORE-- IT'S A MIRACLE AH'VE LASTED THIS LONG. SURE HOPE AH DON'T RUN OUTTA "GAS."
S'POSE AH CATCH 'EM-- IF AH ***CANNONBALL*** INTO THE PLANE, IT'LL MOST LIKELY CRASH AN' KILL EVERYBODY ABOARD. AH DON'T KNOW HOW TO HIT IT SO'S IT'LL *COME* DOWN SAFELY. BUT AH CAN'T LET 'EM GET AWAY, EITHER.
BETTER FIGURE THINGS OUT RIGHT QUICK, THEY'RE CLIMBIN' HIGHER THAN THERE'S AIR TO BREATHE!
THAT KID WON'T QUIT. HIS POWER'S INCREDIBLE, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HIM.
TOO BAD HE WASN'T ON OUR SHOPPING LIST, THE BOSS COULD USE TALENT LIKE THAT.
C'EST LA VIE!
HE'S CLOSE ENOUGH-- LET'S SEE HOW HE HANDLES A FACE FULL OF AFTERBURNER.
*RAW FLAME EXPLODES FROM BOTH ENGINES, AS THE AIRCRAFT ACCELERATES TO FULL POWER. IT CAN'T HURT SAM...*
*...BUT IT DOES STARTLE HIM...*
*...WHICH SHATTERS HIS CONCENTRATION...*
*...WHICH MAKES HIM STOP BLASTING.*
*GRAVITY DOES THE REST.*

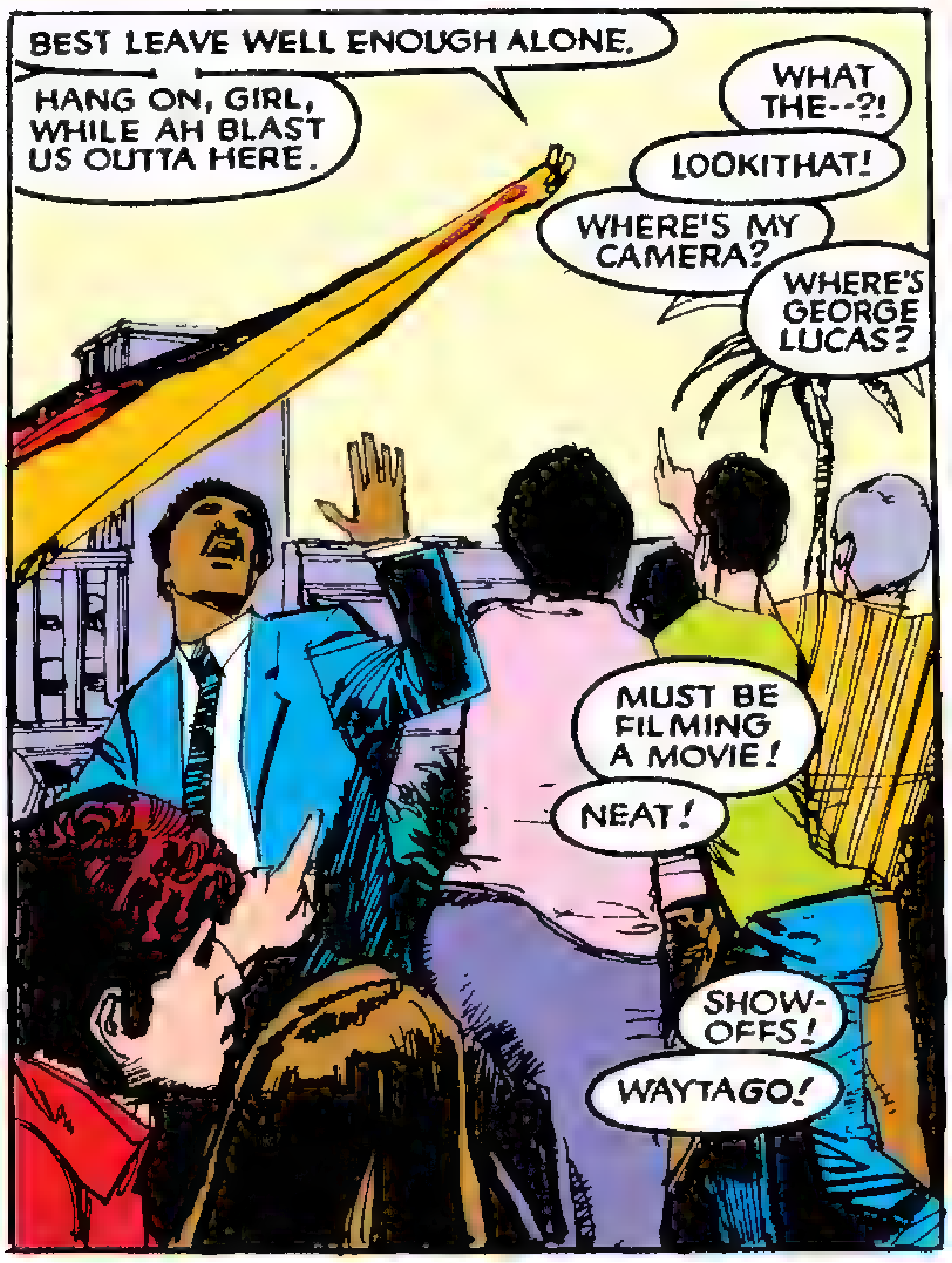

WHERE'S TH' *AIR?!!*
CAN'T PULL A DECENT BREATH!
CAN'T MOVE --SO DARN *COLD*-- AH'M FROZEN SOLID!
TOO TIRED...
...TOO HARD TO THINK...
...CAN'T IGNITE A RESTART.
AH'M DONE FOR!
AH'M SORRY, KIDS -- WHEN Y'ALL NEEDED ME MOST, AH FAILED.
AT LEAST PROFESSOR XAVIER AIN'T HERE TO SEE ME SCREW-UP.
AH WONDER WHAT HE'LL TELL MOMMA--
-?!?
*A STEPPIN' DISK!*
ILLYANA, YOU *TELEPORTED* ME TO LIMBO!
AND USED MY *MAGICKS* TO THAW YOU OUT. FEELING BETTER, I HOPE?
JUS' FINE -- GOOD AS NEW.
THAT'S TWICE AH OWE YOU.
I DON'T KEEP SCORE.
I THOUGHT WE MIGHT ENJOY A PRIVATE CHAT WITH OUR GUEST BEFORE HANDING HIM OVER TO THE POLICE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE, WHERE AM I?!
*LIMBO,* CHUMP!
AN' *WE'RE* ASKIN' THE QUESTIONS!
I STRONGLY SUGGEST YOU COOPERATE.
TO COIN A PHRASE, WE REALLY DO HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK.

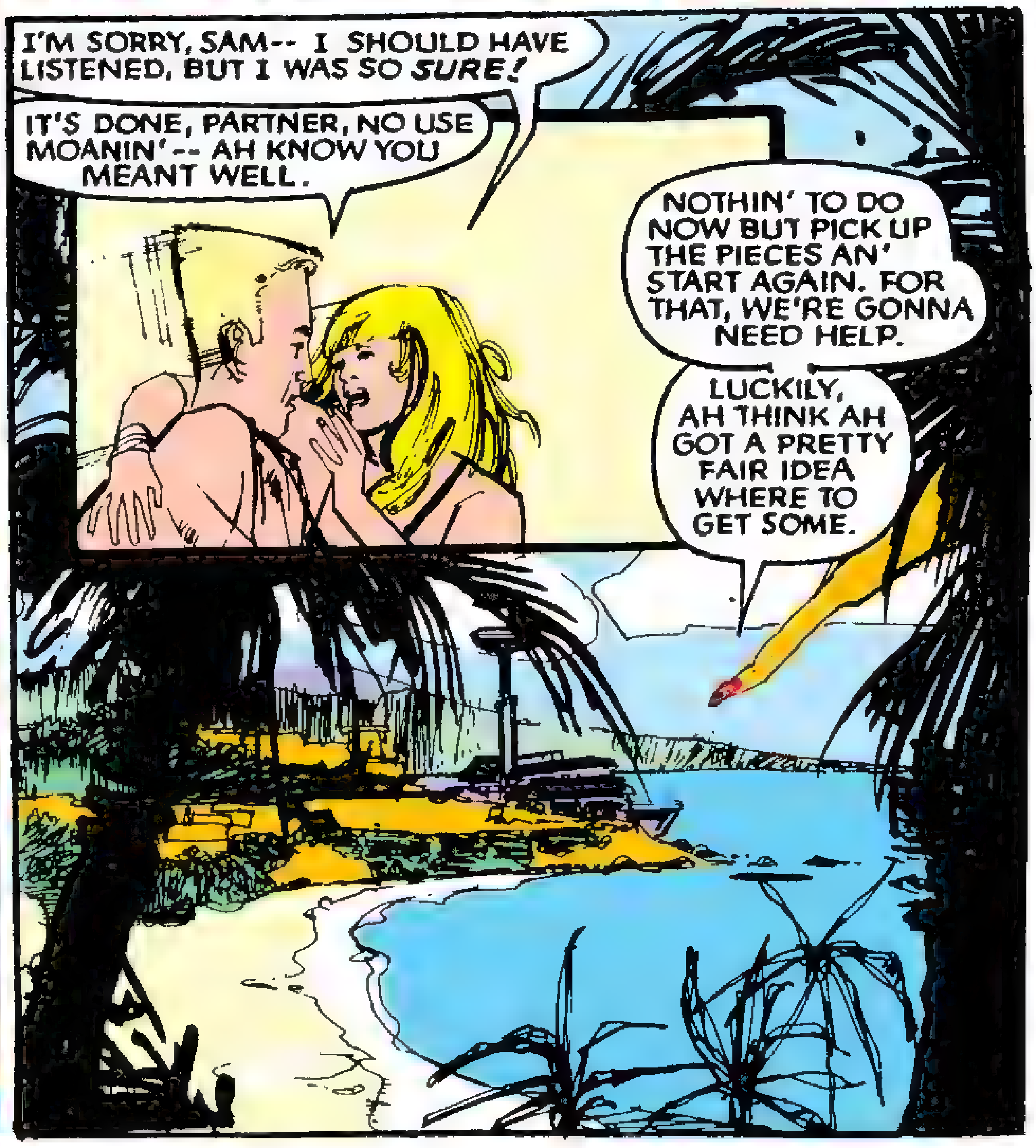

BIG HAIRY DEAL-- I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SCARED OF A COUPLE'A SKINNY GEEKS?!
DO YOUR WORST, SWEETHEART, YOU DON'T GET WORD ONE FROM ME!
BUT YOU MISUNDERSTAND. NEITHER SAM NOR I WILL HANDLE YOUR INTERROGATION.
I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE, MISTER, REALLY I DO-- ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET A CHANCE TO PROVE IT.
SHE LEAVES THE DIRTY WORK TO S'YM.
I'LL TALK!
SOMETIME LATER...
WE CAN'T DO THIS ON OUR OWN, IT'S CRAZY!
WHAT CHOICE HAVE WE?!
THE PROFESSOR AND THE X-MEN ARE AWAY-- BY THE TIME WE GATHER EVERYBODY, BOBBY AND AMARA COULD BE ANYWHERE! SAM, THEY COULD BE DEAD!!
OUR BEST BET IS FOR ME TO TELEPORT US AFTER THEM, WE MIGHT EVEN BEAT THAT JET TO L.A.
YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR POWER OVER THOSE KINDS OF DISTANCES!
I CAN TOO, I'VE BEEN PRACTICING!
FAMOUS LAST WORDS.
YOU GOT A BETTER IDEA?! YOU'RE THE TEAM LEADER, YOU COME UP WITH SOMETHING!
WHILE S'YM'S MISTRESS IS AWAY, YOU'LL BE LEFT IN S'YM'S TENDER CARE-- LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THAT, eh, GONNA BE A LOTTA FUN? O'COURSE, SHE DON'T COME BACK--
--OR WORSE, COMES BACK MAD...

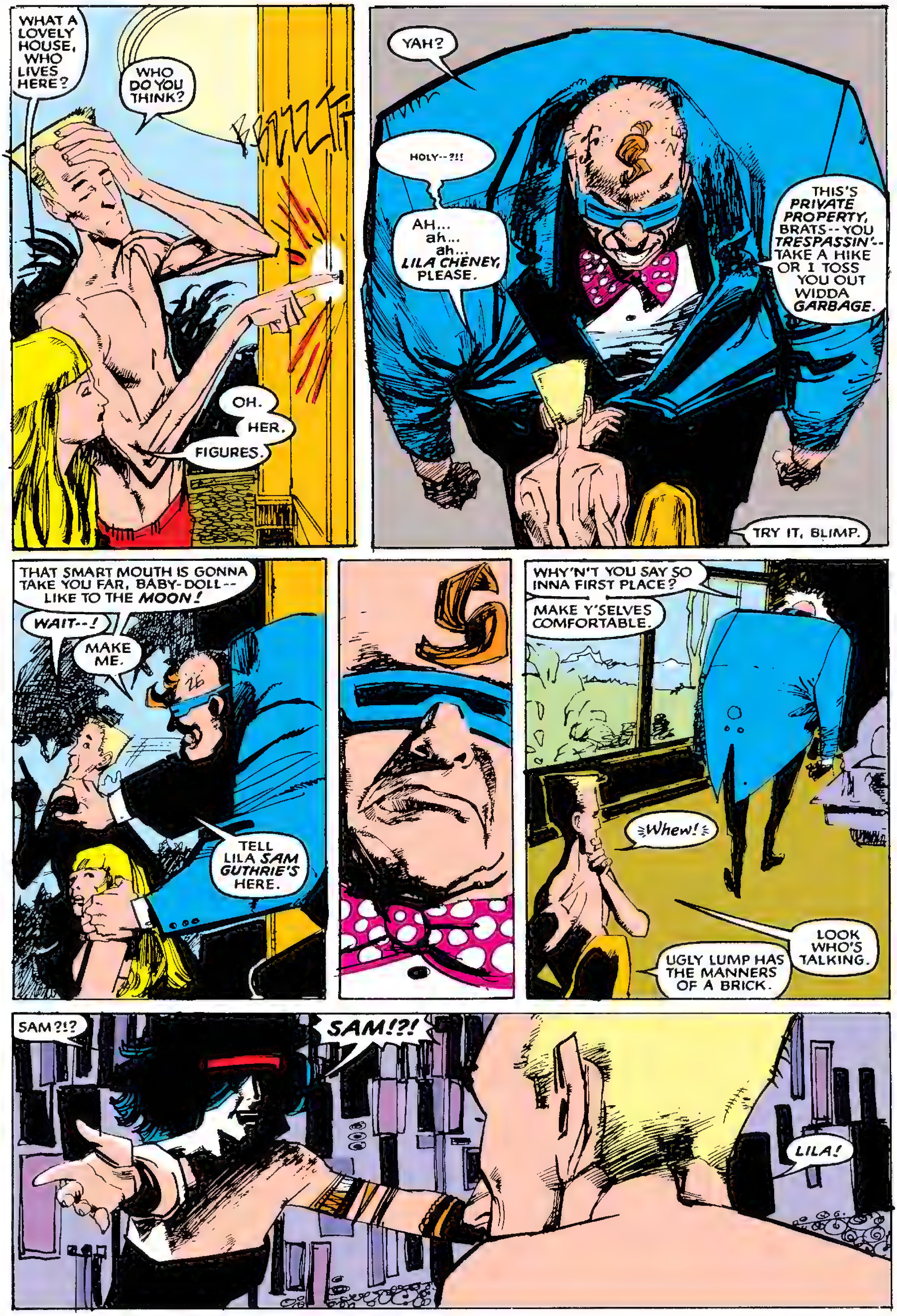

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

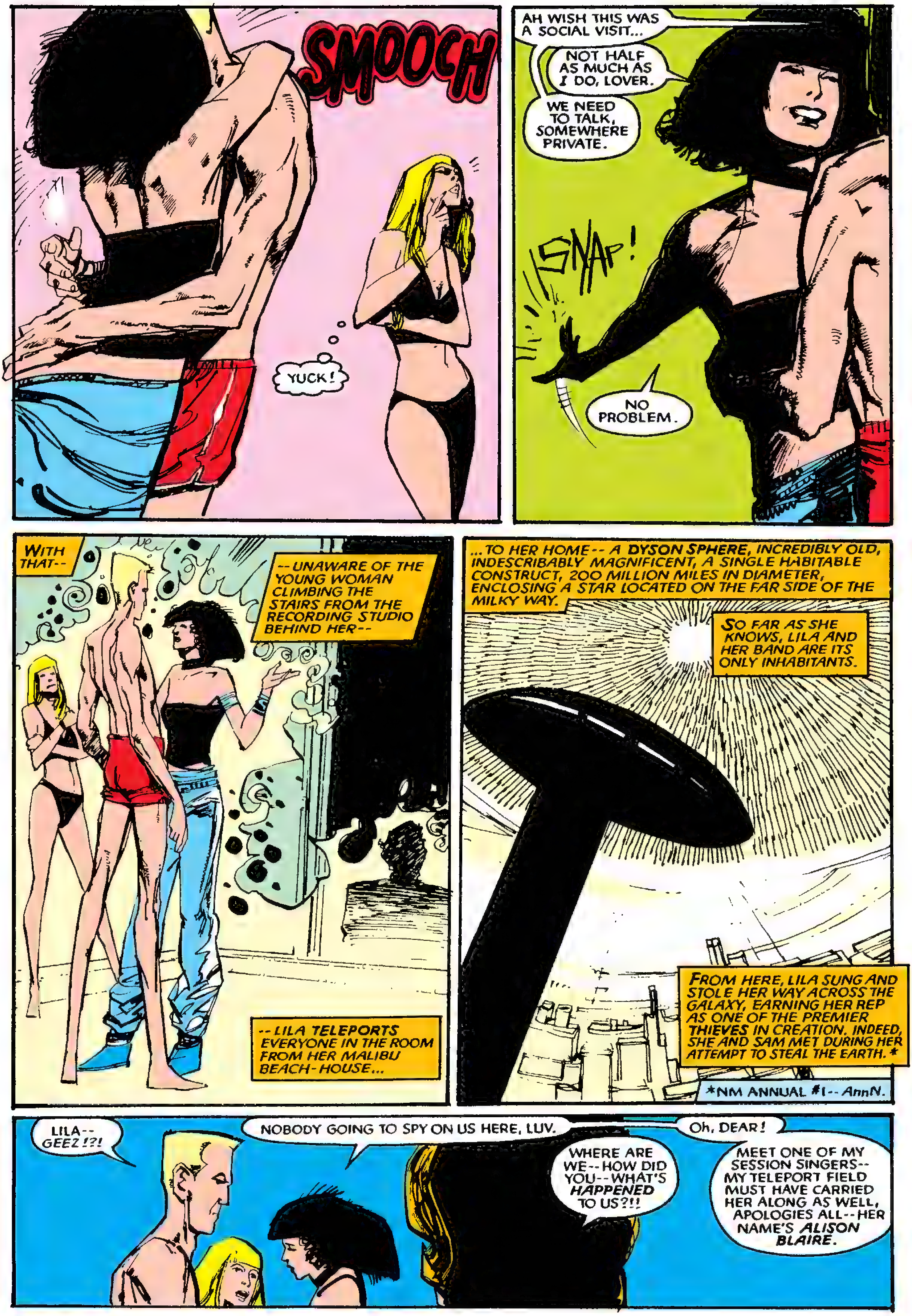

AM I GOOD, OR WHAT?!
COULD'A WISHED FOR A LESS CONSPICUOUS PLACE T' LAND.
SOME PEOPLE ARE *NEVER* SATISFIED!
ILLYANA-- LOOK AT THAT PAPER! *LOOK AT THE DATE!!*

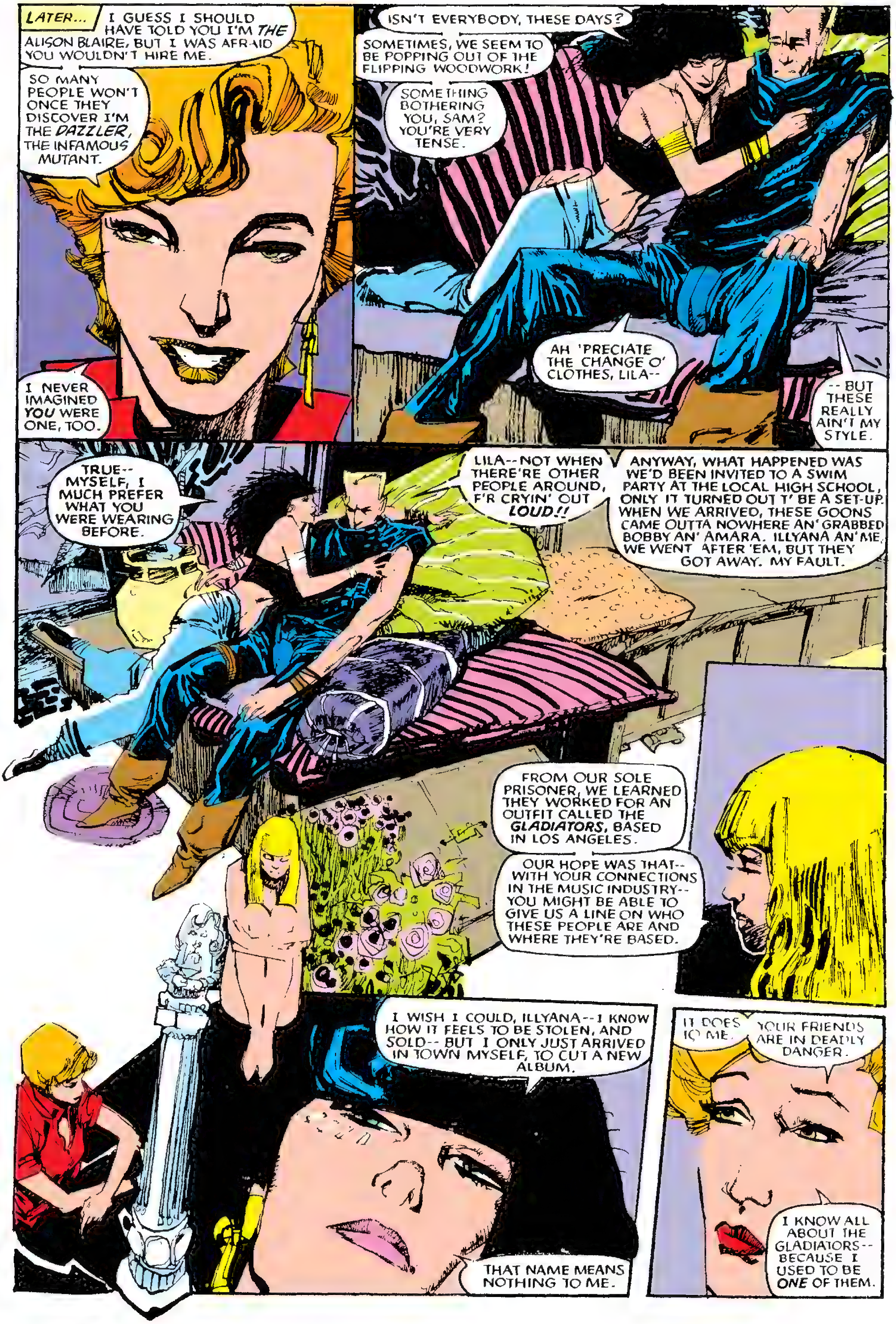

IT'S BEEN A *WEEK* SINCE THE KIDNAPPING! YOU SHIFTED US IN *TIME* AS WELL AS SPACE!
I'LL TAKE US BACK TO *LIMBO* AND TRY AGAIN!
NO!!

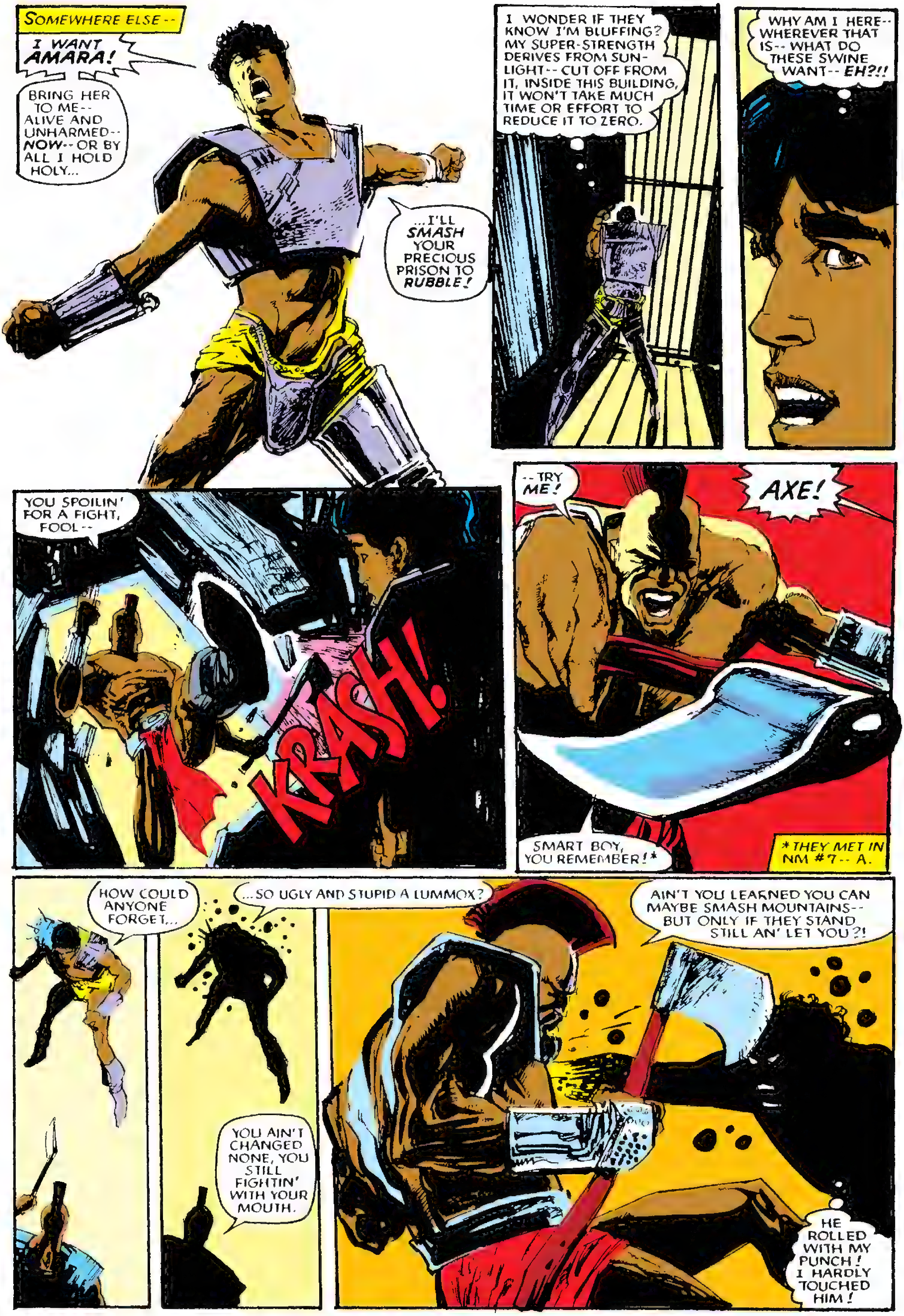

BEST LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.
HANG ON, GIRL, WHILE AH BLAST US OUTTA HERE.
WHAT THE--?!
LOOKITHAT!
WHERE'S MY CAMERA?
WHERE'S GEORGE LUCAS?
MUST BE FILMING A MOVIE!
NEAT!
SHOW-OFFS!
WAYTA*GO!*

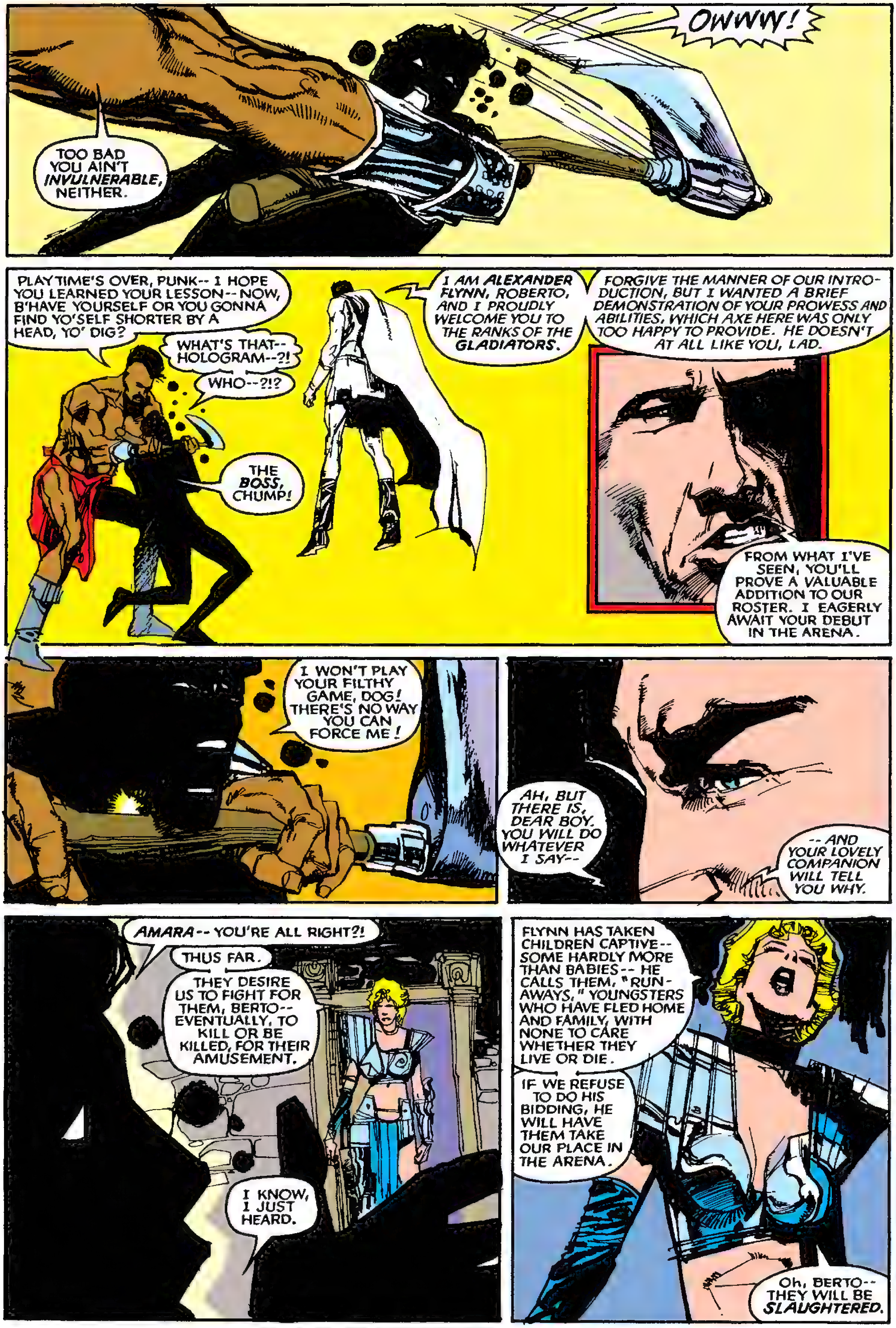

I'M SORRY, SAM-- I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED, BUT I WAS SO *SURE!*
IT'S DONE, PARTNER, NO USE MOANIN'-- AH KNOW YOU MEANT WELL.
NOTHIN' TO DO NOW BUT PICK UP THE PIECES AN' START AGAIN. FOR THAT, WE'RE GONNA NEED HELP.
LUCKILY, AH THINK AH GOT A PRETTY FAIR IDEA WHERE TO GET SOME.

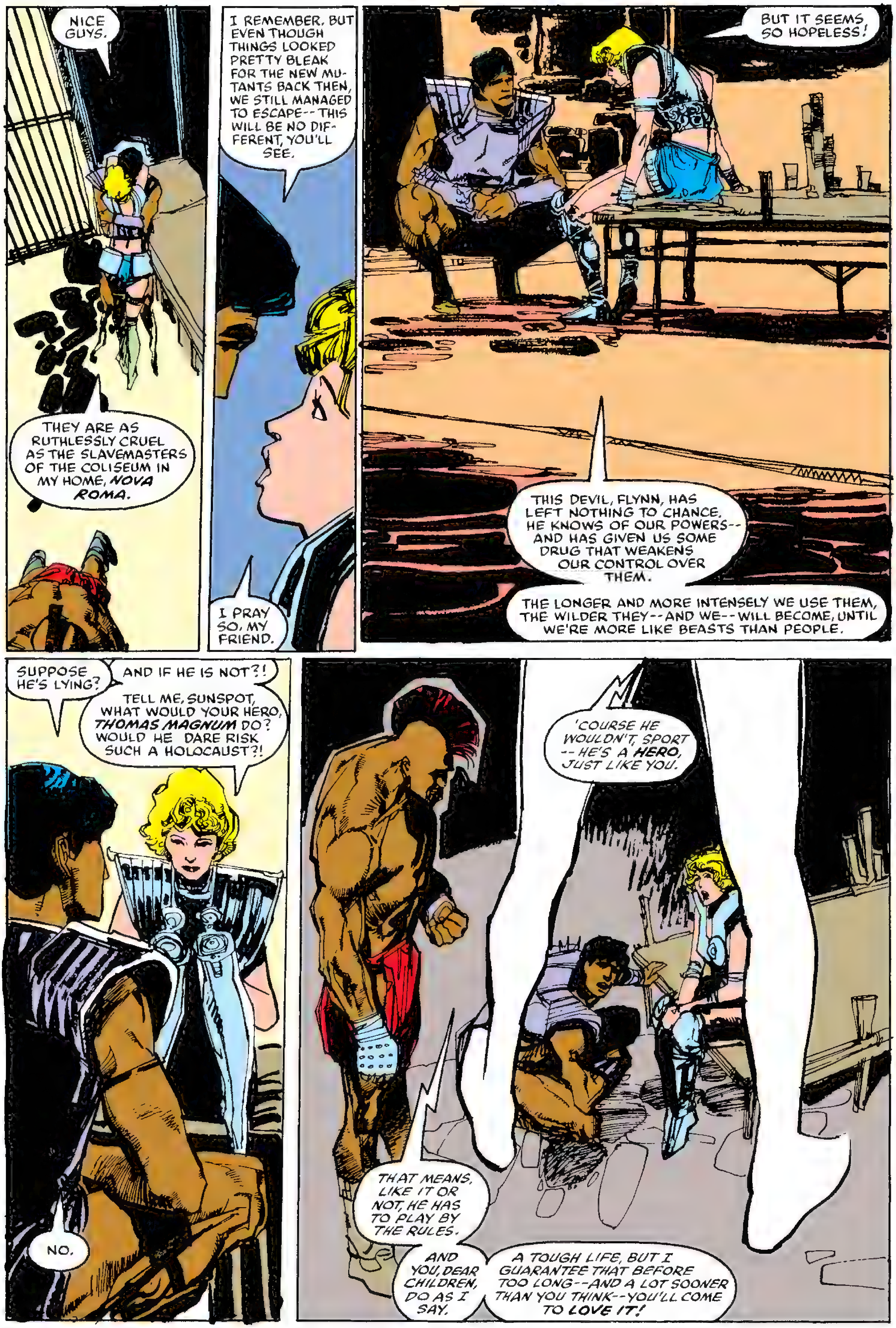

WHAT A LOVELY HOUSE, WHO LIVES HERE?
WHO DO YOU THINK?
BRZZZT
OH.
HER.
FIGURES.
YAH?
HOLY--?!!
AH... ah... ah... LILA CHENEY, PLEASE.
THIS'S PRIVATE PROPERTY, BRATS--YOU TRESPASSIN'--TAKE A HIKE OR I TOSS YOU OUT WIDDA GARBAGE.
TRY IT, BLIMP.
THAT SMART MOUTH IS GONNA TAKE YOU FAR, BABY-DOLL--LIKE TO THE MOON!
WAIT--!
MAKE ME.
TELL LILA SAM GUTHRIE'S HERE.
WHY'N'T YOU SAY SO INNA FIRST PLACE?
MAKE Y'SELVES COMFORTABLE.
Whew!
UGLY LUMP HAS THE MANNERS OF A BRICK.
LOOK WHO'S TALKING.
SAM?!?
SAM!?!
LILA!

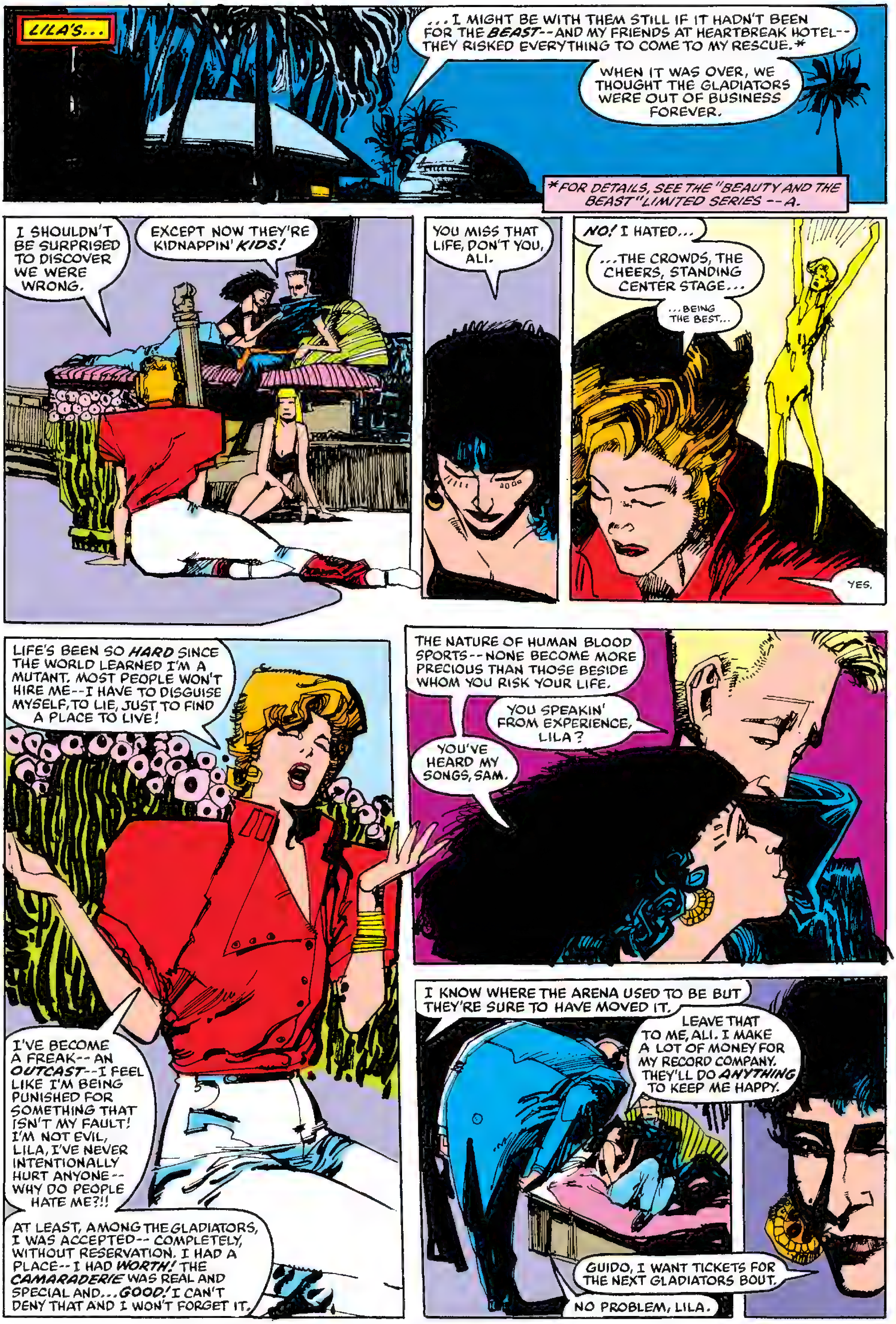

SMOOCH
YUCK!
AH WISH THIS WAS A SOCIAL VISIT...
NOT HALF AS MUCH AS *I* DO, LOVER.
WE NEED TO TALK, SOMEWHERE PRIVATE.
SNAP!
NO PROBLEM.
WITH THAT--
--UNAWARE OF THE YOUNG WOMAN CLIMBING THE STAIRS FROM THE RECORDING STUDIO BEHIND HER--
--LILA TELEPORTS EVERYONE IN THE ROOM FROM HER MALIBU BEACH-HOUSE...
...TO HER HOME--A **DYSON SPHERE**, INCREDIBLY OLD, INDESCRIBABLY MAGNIFICENT, A SINGLE HABITABLE CONSTRUCT, 200 MILLION MILES IN DIAMETER, ENCLOSING A STAR LOCATED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE MILKY WAY.
SO FAR AS SHE KNOWS, LILA AND HER BAND ARE ITS ONLY INHABITANTS.
FROM HERE, LILA SUNG AND STOLE HER WAY ACROSS THE GALAXY, EARNING HER REP AS ONE OF THE PREMIER THIEVES IN CREATION. INDEED, SHE AND SAM MET DURING HER ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE EARTH.*
*NM ANNUAL #1--AnnN.
LILA-- GEEZ!?!
NOBODY GOING TO SPY ON US HERE, LUV.
WHERE ARE WE--HOW DID YOU--WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO US?!!
Oh, DEAR!
MEET ONE OF MY SESSION SINGERS--MY TELEPORT FIELD MUST HAVE CARRIED HER ALONG AS WELL, APOLOGIES ALL--HER NAME'S *ALISON BLAIRE*.

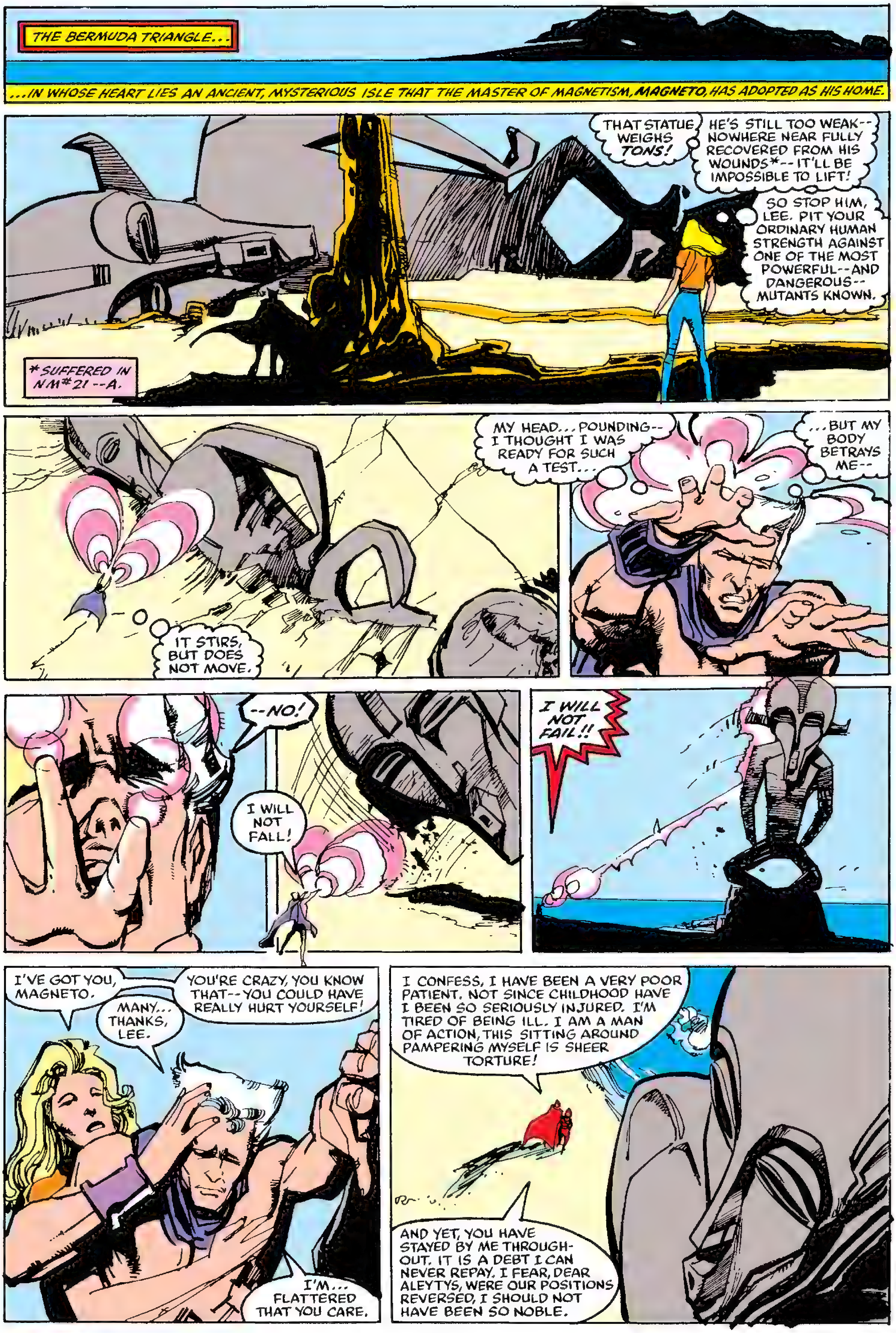

LATER...
I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU I'M *THE* ALISON BLAIRE, BUT I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T HIRE ME.
SO MANY PEOPLE WON'T ONCE THEY DISCOVER I'M THE *DAZZLER*, THE INFAMOUS MUTANT.
I NEVER IMAGINED *YOU* WERE ONE, TOO.
ISN'T EVERYBODY, THESE DAYS?
SOMETIMES, WE SEEM TO BE POPPING OUT OF THE FLIPPING WOODWORK!
SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU, SAM? YOU'RE VERY TENSE.
AH 'PRECIATE THE CHANGE O' CLOTHES, LILA--
--BUT THESE REALLY AIN'T MY STYLE.
TRUE-- MYSELF, I MUCH PREFER WHAT YOU WERE WEARING BEFORE.
LILA--NOT WHEN THERE'RE OTHER PEOPLE AROUND, F'R CRYIN' OUT *LOUD!!*
ANYWAY, WHAT HAPPENED WAS WE'D BEEN INVITED TO A SWIM PARTY AT THE LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL, ONLY IT TURNED OUT T' BE A SET-UP. WHEN WE ARRIVED, THESE GOONS CAME OUTTA NOWHERE AN' GRABBED BOBBY AN' AMARA. ILLYANA AN' ME, WE WENT AFTER 'EM, BUT THEY GOT AWAY. MY FAULT.
FROM OUR SOLE PRISONER, WE LEARNED THEY WORKED FOR AN OUTFIT CALLED THE *GLADIATORS*, BASED IN LOS ANGELES.
OUR HOPE WAS THAT--WITH YOUR CONNECTIONS IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY--YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GIVE US A LINE ON WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE AND WHERE THEY'RE BASED.
I WISH I COULD, ILLYANA--I KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE STOLEN, AND SOLD--BUT I ONLY JUST ARRIVED IN TOWN MYSELF, TO CUT A NEW ALBUM.
THAT NAME MEANS NOTHING TO ME.
IT DOES TO ME.
YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN DEADLY DANGER.
I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE GLADIATORS--BECAUSE I USED TO BE *ONE* OF THEM.

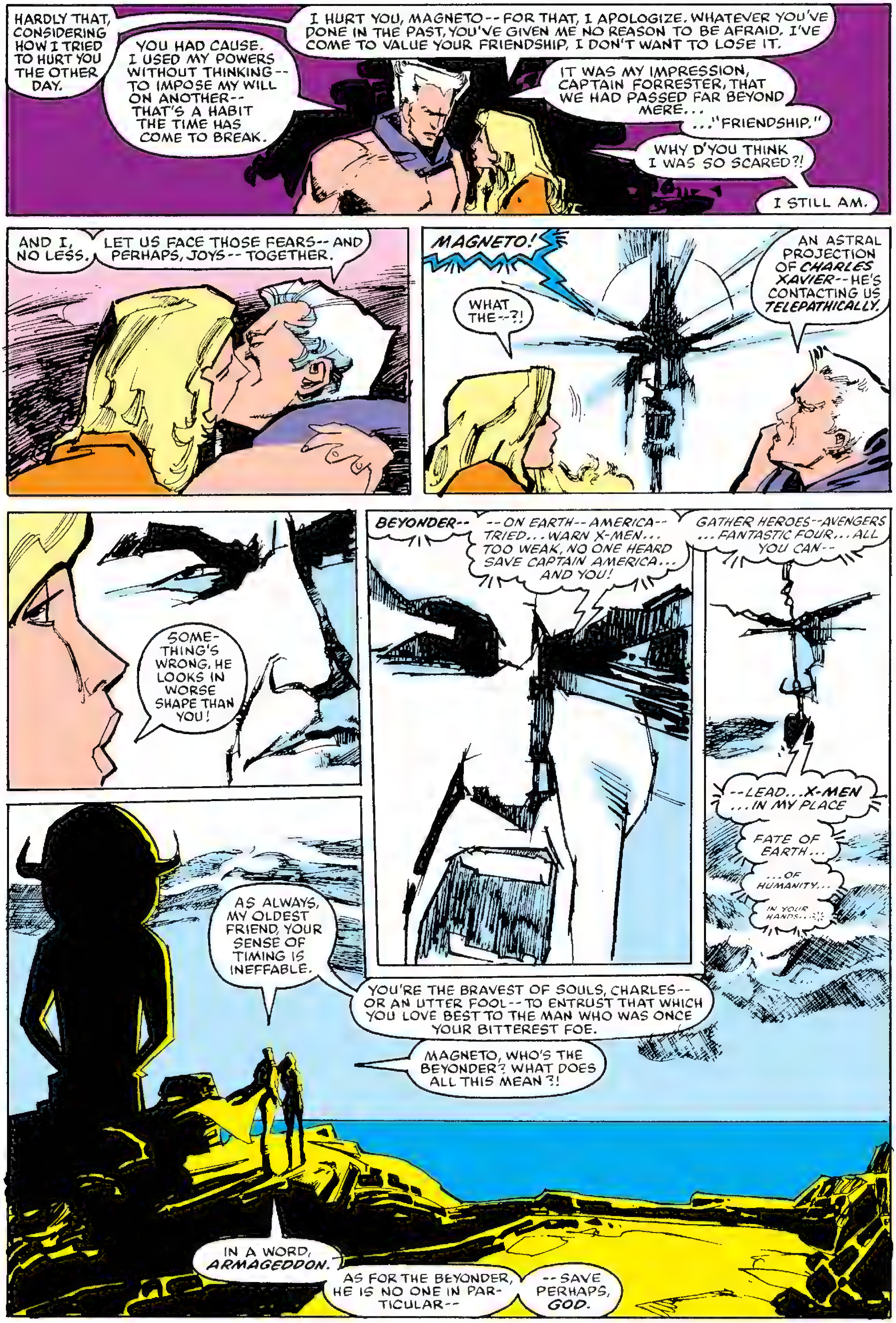

SOMEWHERE ELSE--
I WANT AMARA!
BRING HER TO ME-- ALIVE AND UNHARMED-- NOW-- OR BY ALL I HOLD HOLY...
...I'LL SMASH YOUR PRECIOUS PRISON TO RUBBLE!
I WONDER IF THEY KNOW I'M BLUFFING? MY SUPER-STRENGTH DERIVES FROM SUNLIGHT-- CUT OFF FROM IT, INSIDE THIS BUILDING, IT WON'T TAKE MUCH TIME OR EFFORT TO REDUCE IT TO ZERO.
WHY AM I HERE-- WHEREVER THAT IS-- WHAT DO THESE SWINE WANT-- EH?!!
YOU SPOILIN' FOR A FIGHT, FOOL--
KRASH!
--TRY ME!
AXE!
SMART BOY, YOU REMEMBER!*
*THEY MET IN NM #7-- A.
HOW COULD ANYONE FORGET...
...SO UGLY AND STUPID A LUMMOX?
YOU AIN'T CHANGED NONE, YOU STILL FIGHTIN' WITH YOUR MOUTH.
AIN'T YOU LEARNED YOU CAN MAYBE SMASH MOUNTAINS-- BUT ONLY IF THEY STAND STILL AN' LET YOU?!
HE ROLLED WITH MY PUNCH! I HARDLY TOUCHED HIM!

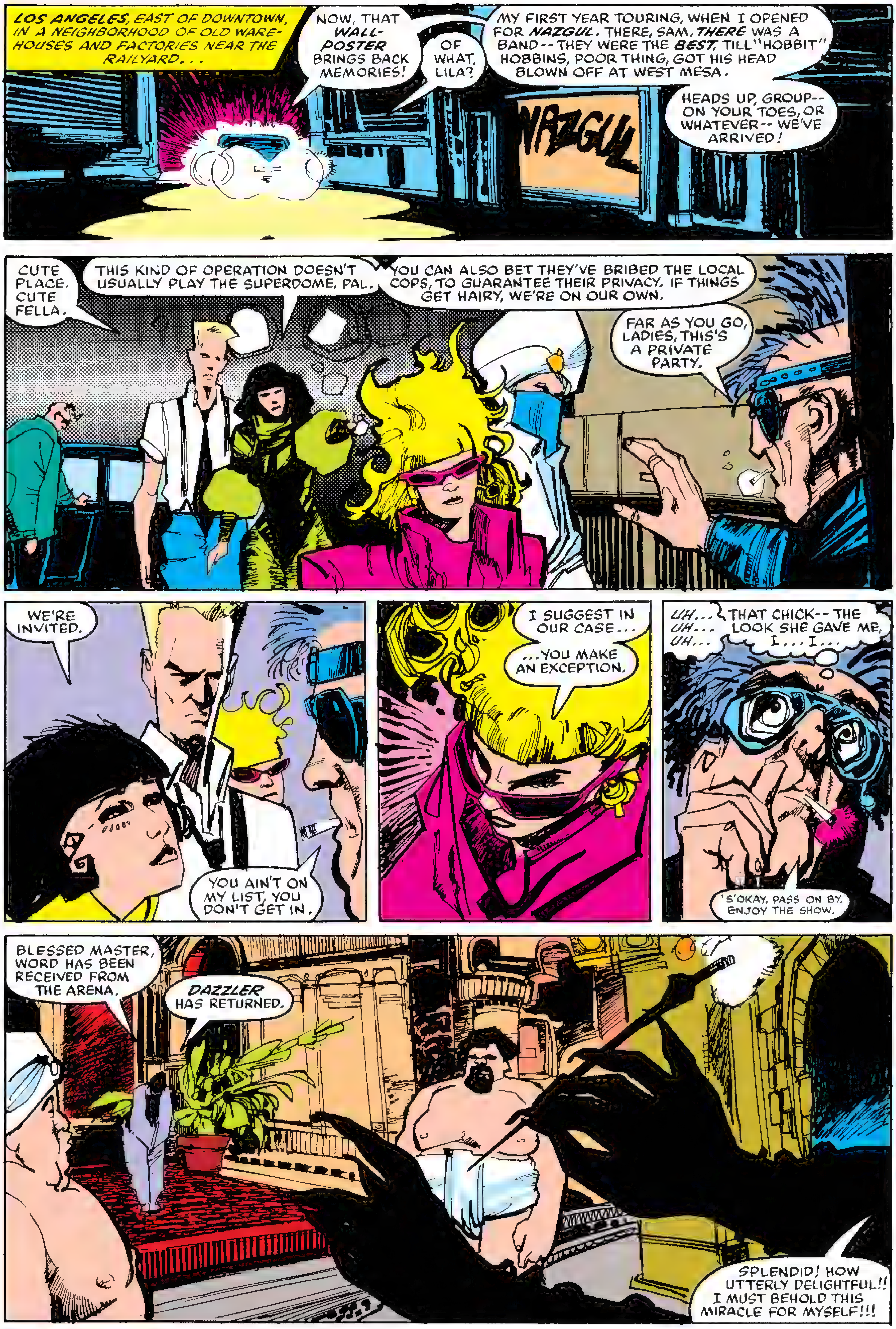

OWWW!
TOO BAD YOU AIN'T *INVULNERABLE*, NEITHER.
PLAYTIME'S OVER, PUNK-- I HOPE YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSON-- NOW, B'HAVE YOURSELF OR YOU GONNA FIND YO'SELF SHORTER BY A HEAD, YO' DIG?
WHAT'S THAT-- HOLOGRAM--?!
WHO--?!?
THE *BOSS*, CHUMP!
I AM **ALEXANDER FLYNN**, ROBERTO, AND I PROUDLY WELCOME YOU TO THE RANKS OF THE **GLADIATORS**.
FORGIVE THE MANNER OF OUR INTRODUCTION, BUT I WANTED A BRIEF DEMONSTRATION OF YOUR PROWESS AND ABILITIES, WHICH AXE HERE WAS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO PROVIDE. HE DOESN'T AT ALL LIKE YOU, LAD.
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, YOU'LL PROVE A VALUABLE ADDITION TO OUR ROSTER. I EAGERLY AWAIT YOUR DEBUT IN THE ARENA.
I WON'T PLAY YOUR FILTHY GAME, DOG! THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN FORCE ME!
AH, BUT THERE IS, DEAR BOY. YOU WILL DO WHATEVER I SAY--
-- AND YOUR LOVELY COMPANION WILL TELL YOU WHY.
*AMARA*-- YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?!
THUS FAR.
THEY DESIRE US TO FIGHT FOR THEM, BERTO-- EVENTUALLY, TO KILL OR BE KILLED, FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT.
I KNOW, I JUST HEARD.
FLYNN HAS TAKEN CHILDREN CAPTIVE-- SOME HARDLY MORE THAN BABIES-- HE CALLS THEM, "RUNAWAYS," YOUNGSTERS WHO HAVE FLED HOME AND FAMILY, WITH NONE TO CARE WHETHER THEY LIVE OR DIE.
IF WE REFUSE TO DO HIS BIDDING, HE WILL HAVE THEM TAKE OUR PLACE IN THE ARENA.
Oh, BERTO-- THEY WILL BE *SLAUGHTERED*.

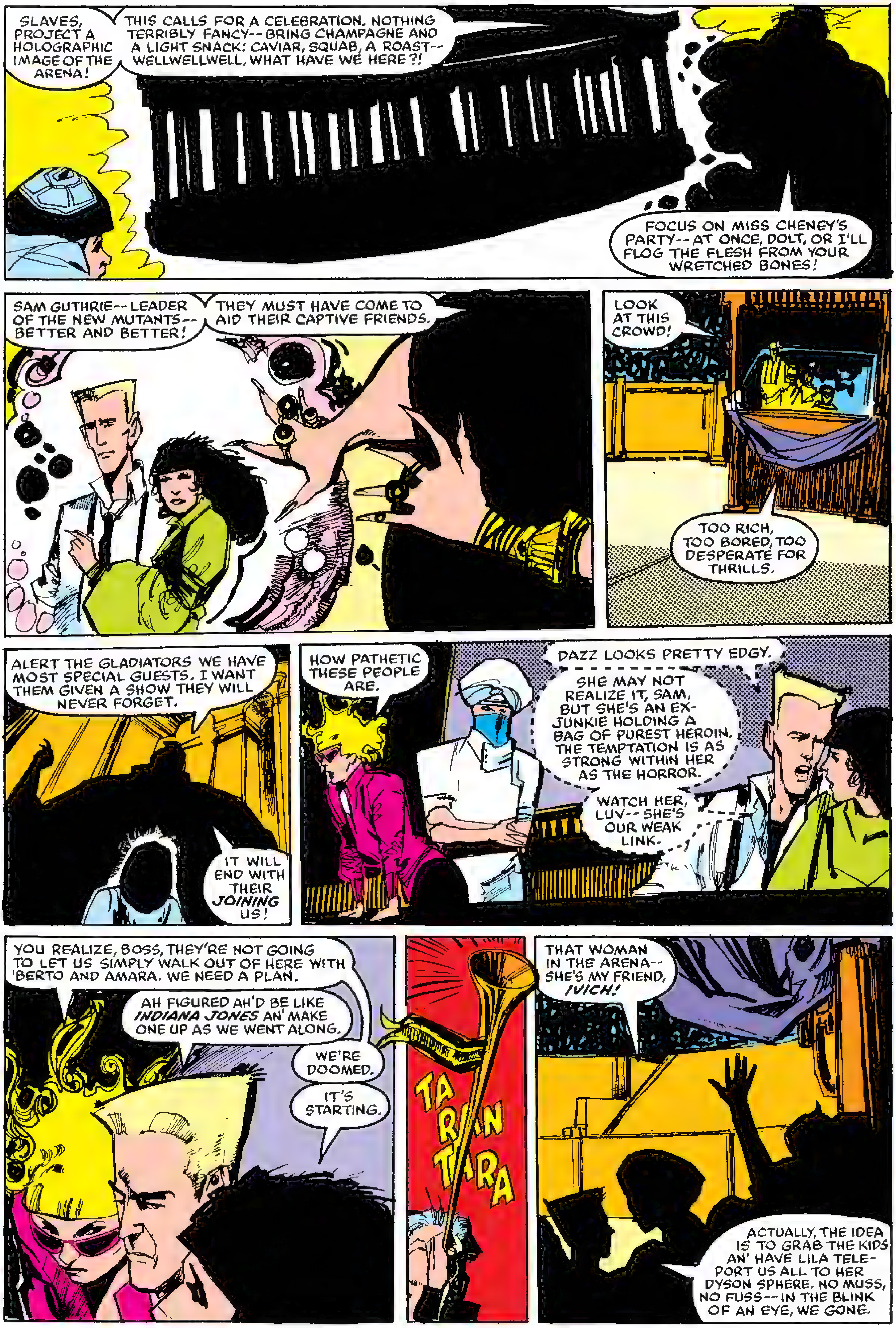

NICE GUYS.
THEY ARE AS RUTHLESSLY CRUEL AS THE SLAVEMASTERS OF THE COLISEUM IN MY HOME, *NOVA ROMA*.
I REMEMBER. BUT EVEN THOUGH THINGS LOOKED PRETTY BLEAK FOR THE NEW MUTANTS BACK THEN, WE STILL MANAGED TO ESCAPE-- THIS WILL BE NO DIFFERENT, YOU'LL SEE.
I PRAY SO, MY FRIEND.
BUT IT SEEMS SO HOPELESS!
THIS DEVIL, FLYNN, HAS LEFT NOTHING TO CHANCE. HE KNOWS OF OUR POWERS-- AND HAS GIVEN US SOME DRUG THAT WEAKENS OUR CONTROL OVER THEM.
THE LONGER AND MORE INTENSELY WE USE THEM, THE WILDER THEY--AND WE--WILL BECOME, UNTIL WE'RE MORE LIKE BEASTS THAN PEOPLE.
SUPPOSE HE'S LYING?
AND IF HE IS NOT?!
TELL ME, SUNSPOT, WHAT WOULD YOUR HERO, *THOMAS MAGNUM* DO? WOULD HE DARE RISK SUCH A HOLOCAUST?!
NO.
'COURSE HE WOULDN'T, SPORT--HE'S A *HERO*, JUST LIKE YOU.
THAT MEANS, LIKE IT OR NOT, HE HAS TO PLAY BY THE RULES.
AND YOU, DEAR CHILDREN, DO AS I SAY.
A TOUGH LIFE, BUT I GUARANTEE THAT BEFORE TOO LONG--AND A LOT SOONER THAN YOU THINK--YOU'LL COME TO *LOVE IT!*

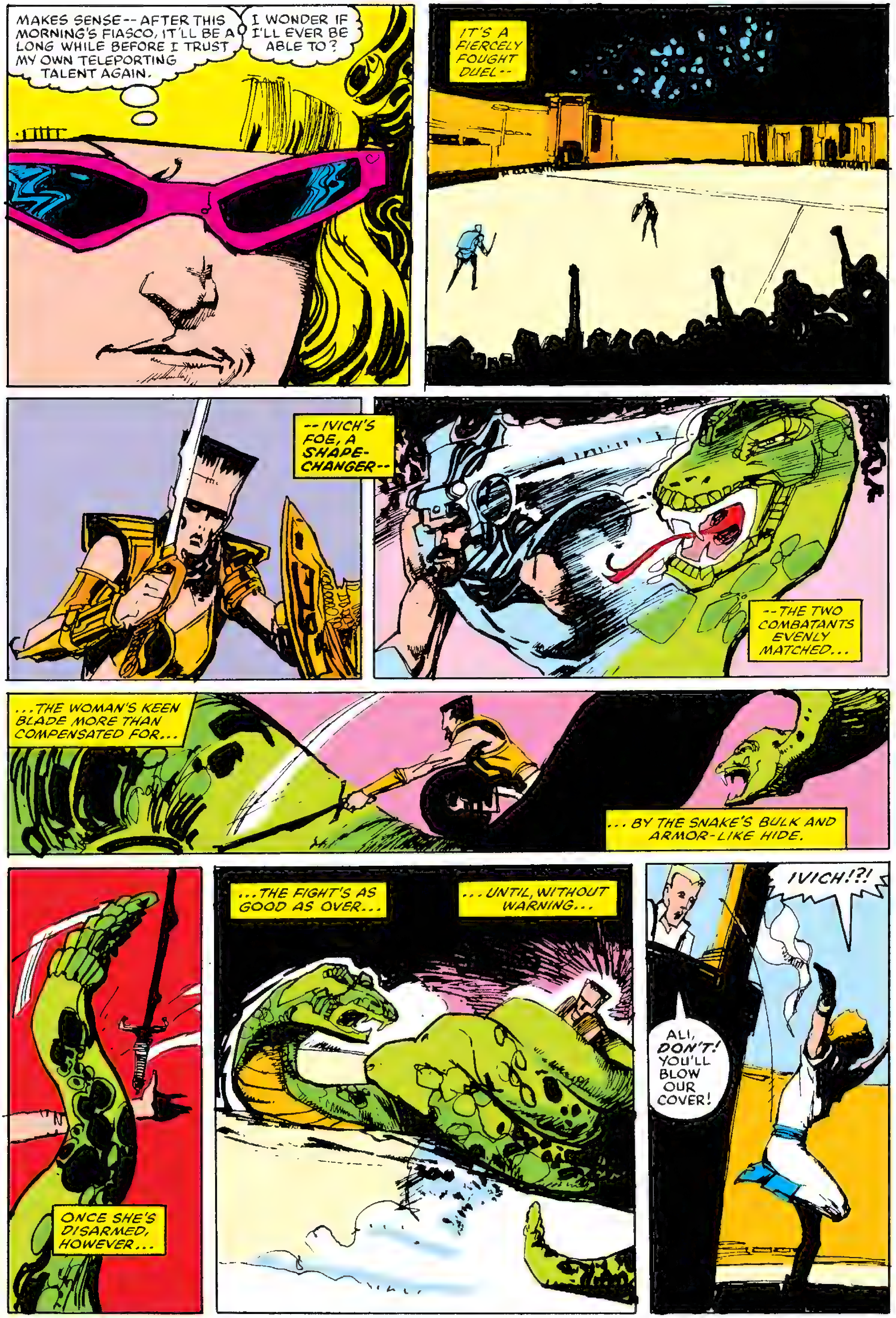

LILA'S...
...I MIGHT BE WITH THEM STILL IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE BEAST--AND MY FRIENDS AT HEARTBREAK HOTEL--THEY RISKED EVERYTHING TO COME TO MY RESCUE.*
WHEN IT WAS OVER, WE THOUGHT THE GLADIATORS WERE OUT OF BUSINESS FOREVER.
*FOR DETAILS, SEE THE "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST" LIMITED SERIES --A.
I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO DISCOVER WE WERE WRONG.
EXCEPT NOW THEY'RE KIDNAPPIN' KIDS!
YOU MISS THAT LIFE, DON'T YOU, ALI.
NO! I HATED...
...THE CROWDS, THE CHEERS, STANDING CENTER STAGE...
...BEING THE BEST...
YES.
LIFE'S BEEN SO HARD SINCE THE WORLD LEARNED I'M A MUTANT. MOST PEOPLE WON'T HIRE ME--I HAVE TO DISGUISE MYSELF, TO LIE, JUST TO FIND A PLACE TO LIVE!
I'VE BECOME A FREAK--AN OUTCAST--I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING PUNISHED FOR SOMETHING THAT ISN'T MY FAULT! I'M NOT EVIL, LILA, I'VE NEVER INTENTIONALLY HURT ANYONE--WHY DO PEOPLE HATE ME?!!
AT LEAST, AMONG THE GLADIATORS, I WAS ACCEPTED--COMPLETELY, WITHOUT RESERVATION. I HAD A PLACE--I HAD WORTH! THE CAMARADERIE WAS REAL AND SPECIAL AND...GOOD! I CAN'T DENY THAT AND I WON'T FORGET IT.
THE NATURE OF HUMAN BLOOD SPORTS--NONE BECOME MORE PRECIOUS THAN THOSE BESIDE WHOM YOU RISK YOUR LIFE.
YOU SPEAKIN' FROM EXPERIENCE, LILA?
YOU'VE HEARD MY SONGS, SAM.
I KNOW WHERE THE ARENA USED TO BE BUT THEY'RE SURE TO HAVE MOVED IT.
LEAVE THAT TO ME, ALI. I MAKE A LOT OF MONEY FOR MY RECORD COMPANY. THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP ME HAPPY.
GUIDO, I WANT TICKETS FOR THE NEXT GLADIATORS BOUT.
NO PROBLEM, LILA.

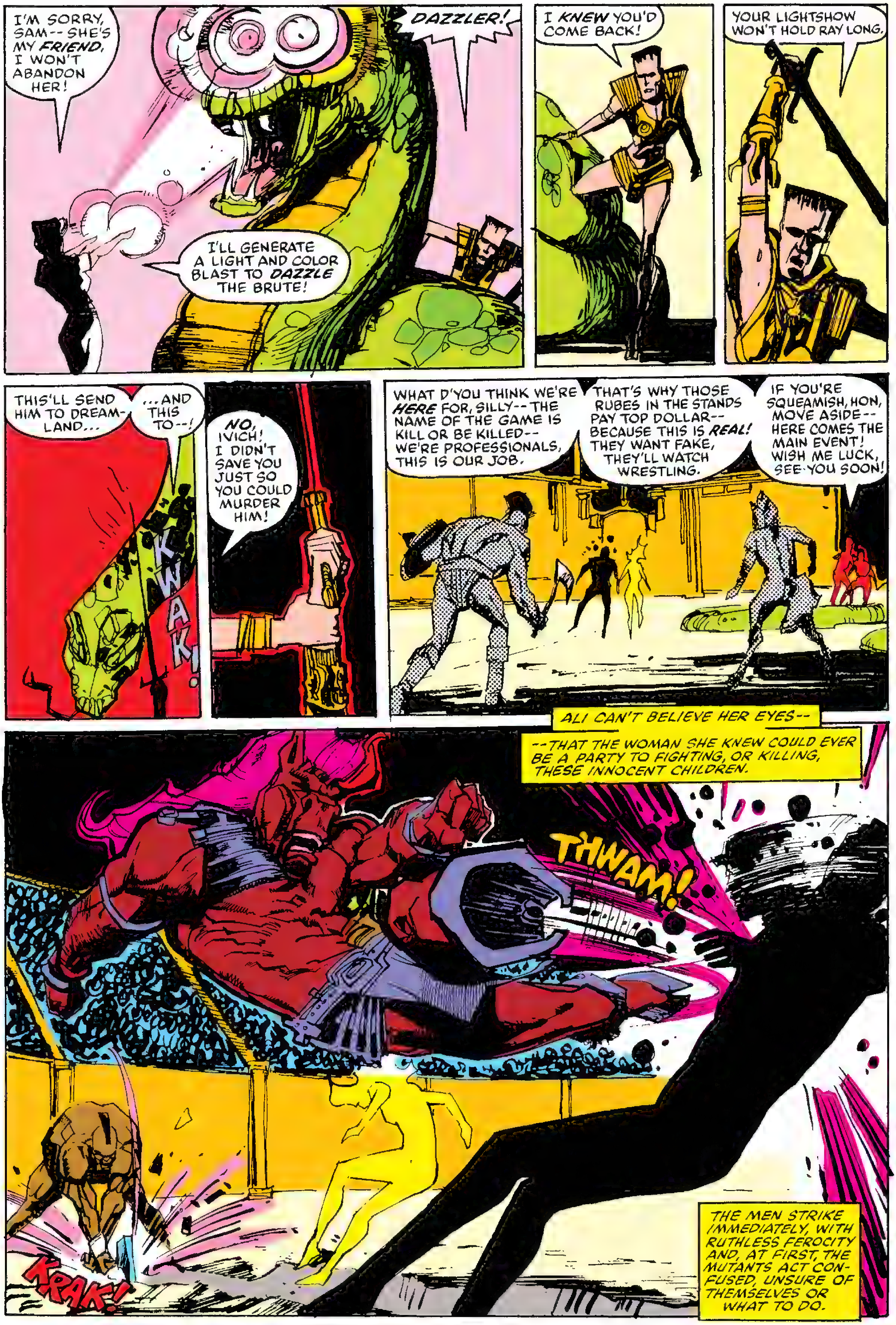

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE...
...IN WHOSE HEART LIES AN ANCIENT, MYSTERIOUS ISLE THAT THE MASTER OF MAGNETISM, **MAGNETO**, HAS ADOPTED AS HIS HOME.
THAT STATUE WEIGHS *TONS!*
HE'S STILL TOO WEAK--NOWHERE NEAR FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS WOUNDS*--IT'LL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO LIFT!
SO STOP HIM, LEE. PIT YOUR ORDINARY HUMAN STRENGTH AGAINST ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL--AND DANGEROUS--MUTANTS KNOWN.
*SUFFERED IN NM#21 --A.
IT STIRS, BUT DOES NOT MOVE.
MY HEAD... POUNDING--I THOUGHT I WAS READY FOR SUCH A TEST...
...BUT MY BODY BETRAYS ME--
--NO!
I WILL NOT FALL!
I WILL NOT FAIL!!
I'VE GOT YOU, MAGNETO.
YOU'RE CRAZY, YOU KNOW THAT--YOU COULD HAVE REALLY HURT YOURSELF!
MANY... THANKS, LEE.
I'M... FLATTERED THAT YOU CARE.
I CONFESS, I HAVE BEEN A VERY POOR PATIENT. NOT SINCE CHILDHOOD HAVE I BEEN SO SERIOUSLY INJURED. I'M TIRED OF BEING ILL. I AM A MAN OF ACTION, THIS SITTING AROUND PAMPERING MYSELF IS SHEER TORTURE!
AND YET, YOU HAVE STAYED BY ME THROUGHOUT. IT IS A DEBT I CAN NEVER REPAY. I FEAR, DEAR ALEYTYS, WERE OUR POSITIONS REVERSED, I SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SO NOBLE.

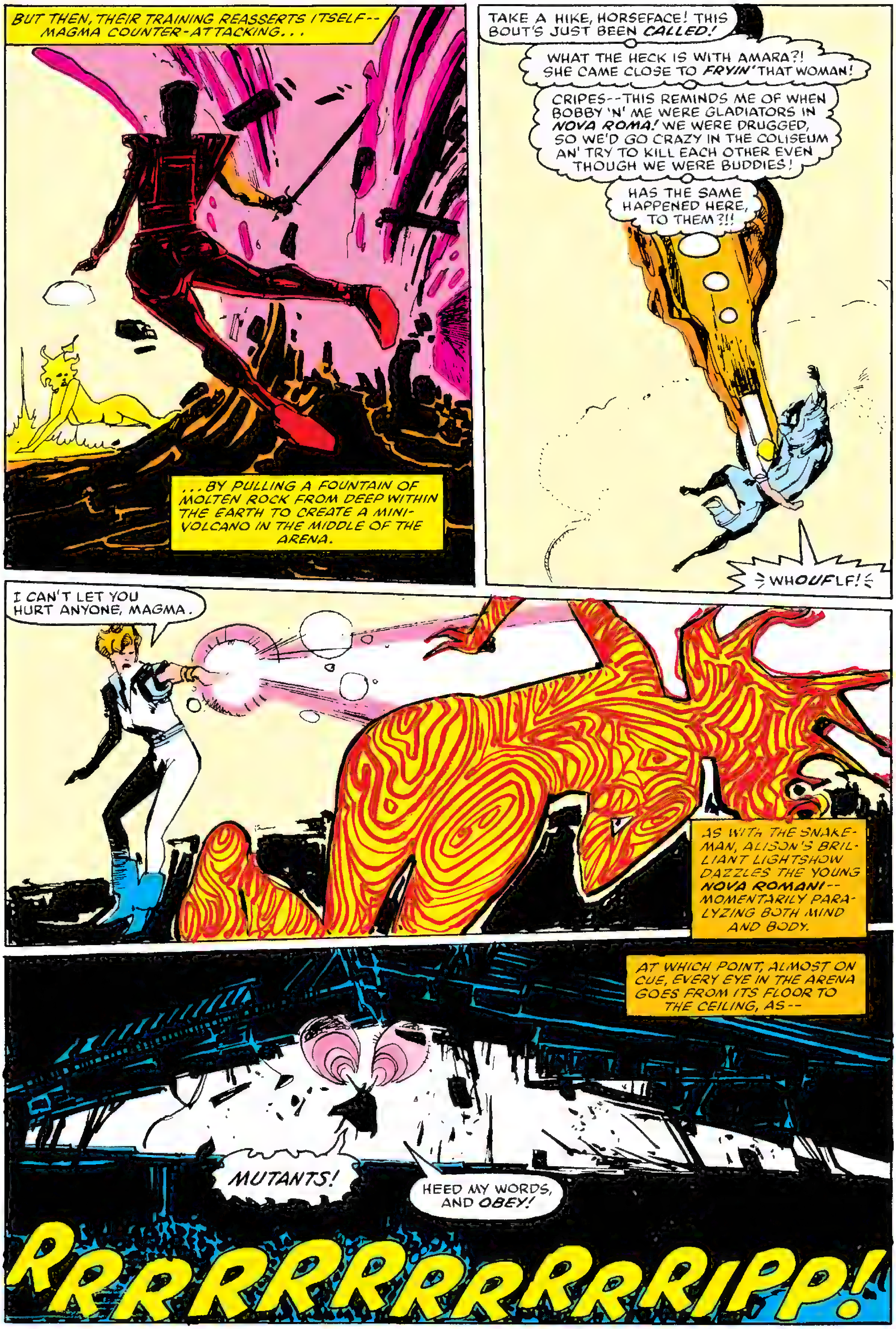

HARDLY THAT, CONSIDERING HOW I TRIED TO HURT YOU THE OTHER DAY.
I HURT YOU, MAGNETO-- FOR THAT, I APOLOGIZE. WHATEVER YOU'VE DONE IN THE PAST, YOU'VE GIVEN ME NO REASON TO BE AFRAID. I'VE COME TO VALUE YOUR FRIENDSHIP. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT.
YOU HAD CAUSE. I USED MY POWERS WITHOUT THINKING-- TO IMPOSE MY WILL ON ANOTHER-- THAT'S A HABIT THE TIME HAS COME TO BREAK.
IT WAS MY IMPRESSION, CAPTAIN FORRESTER, THAT WE HAD PASSED FAR BEYOND MERE...
..."FRIENDSHIP."
WHY D'YOU THINK I WAS SO SCARED?!
I STILL AM.
AND I, NO LESS.
LET US FACE THOSE FEARS-- AND PERHAPS, JOYS-- TOGETHER.
MAGNETO!
WHAT THE--?!
AN ASTRAL PROJECTION OF CHARLES XAVIER-- HE'S CONTACTING US TELEPATHICALLY.
SOME-THING'S WRONG, HE LOOKS IN WORSE SHAPE THAN YOU!
BEYONDER--
--ON EARTH--AMERICA-- TRIED... WARN X-MEN... TOO WEAK, NO ONE HEARD SAVE CAPTAIN AMERICA... AND YOU!
GATHER HEROES--AVENGERS ...FANTASTIC FOUR... ALL YOU CAN--
--LEAD...X-MEN ...IN MY PLACE
FATE OF EARTH...
...OF HUMANITY...
IN YOUR HANDS...
AS ALWAYS, MY OLDEST FRIEND, YOUR SENSE OF TIMING IS INEFFABLE.
YOU'RE THE BRAVEST OF SOULS, CHARLES-- OR AN UTTER FOOL-- TO ENTRUST THAT WHICH YOU LOVE BEST TO THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE YOUR BITTEREST FOE.
MAGNETO, WHO'S THE BEYONDER? WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?!
IN A WORD, ARMAGEDDON.
AS FOR THE BEYONDER, HE IS NO ONE IN PARTICULAR--
--SAVE PERHAPS, GOD.

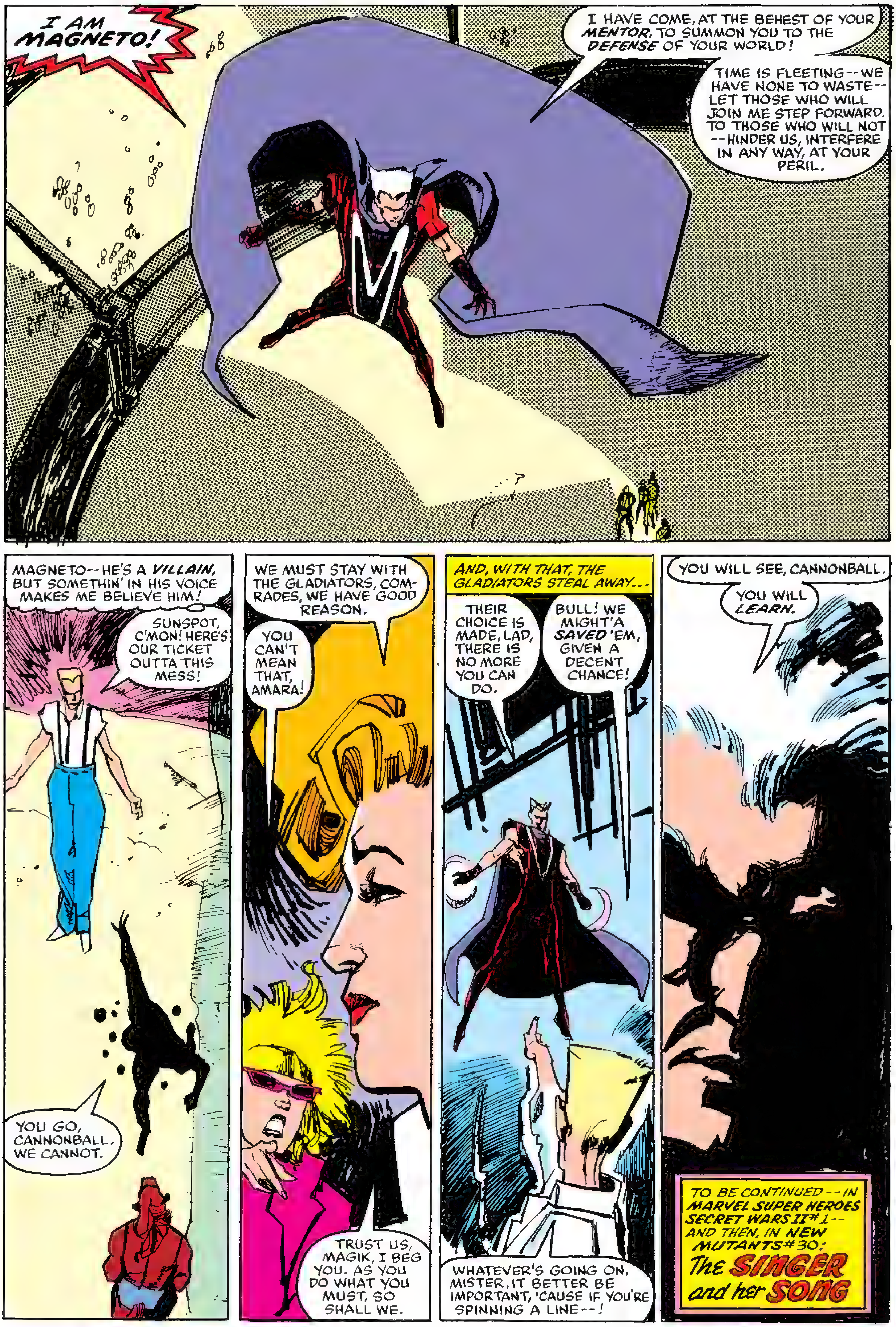

LOS ANGELES, EAST OF DOWNTOWN, IN A NEIGHBORHOOD OF OLD WAREHOUSES AND FACTORIES NEAR THE RAILYARD...
NOW, THAT *WALL-POSTER* BRINGS BACK MEMORIES!
OF WHAT, LILA?
MY FIRST YEAR TOURING, WHEN I OPENED FOR *NAZGUL*. THERE, SAM, *THERE* WAS A BAND -- THEY WERE THE *BEST*, TILL "HOBBIT" HOBBINS, POOR THING, GOT HIS HEAD BLOWN OFF AT WEST MESA.
NAZGUL
HEADS UP, GROUP -- ON YOUR TOES, OR WHATEVER -- WE'VE ARRIVED!
CUTE PLACE. CUTE FELLA.
THIS KIND OF OPERATION DOESN'T USUALLY PLAY THE SUPERDOME, PAL.
YOU CAN ALSO BET THEY'VE BRIBED THE LOCAL COPS, TO GUARANTEE THEIR PRIVACY. IF THINGS GET HAIRY, WE'RE ON OUR OWN.
FAR AS YOU GO, LADIES, THIS'S A PRIVATE PARTY.
WE'RE INVITED.
YOU AIN'T ON MY LIST, YOU DON'T GET IN.
I SUGGEST IN OUR CASE...
...YOU MAKE AN EXCEPTION.
UH... UH... UH...
THAT CHICK -- THE LOOK SHE GAVE ME, I... I...
'S'OKAY. PASS ON BY. ENJOY THE SHOW.
BLESSED MASTER, WORD HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE ARENA.
*DAZZLER* HAS RETURNED.
SPLENDID! HOW UTTERLY DELIGHTFUL!! I MUST BEHOLD THIS MIRACLE FOR MYSELF!!!


SLAVES, PROJECT A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF THE ARENA!
THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION. NOTHING TERRIBLY FANCY-- BRING CHAMPAGNE AND A LIGHT SNACK: CAVIAR, SQUAB, A ROAST-- WELLWELLWELL, WHAT HAVE WE HERE?!
FOCUS ON MISS CHENEY'S PARTY-- AT ONCE, DOLT, OR I'LL FLOG THE FLESH FROM YOUR WRETCHED BONES!
SAM GUTHRIE-- LEADER OF THE NEW MUTANTS-- BETTER AND BETTER!
THEY MUST HAVE COME TO AID THEIR CAPTIVE FRIENDS.
LOOK AT THIS CROWD!
TOO RICH, TOO BORED, TOO DESPERATE FOR THRILLS.
ALERT THE GLADIATORS WE HAVE MOST SPECIAL GUESTS. I WANT THEM GIVEN A SHOW THEY WILL NEVER FORGET.
IT WILL END WITH THEIR *JOINING* US!
HOW PATHETIC THESE PEOPLE ARE.
DAZZ LOOKS PRETTY EDGY.
SHE MAY NOT REALIZE IT, SAM, BUT SHE'S AN EX-JUNKIE HOLDING A BAG OF PUREST HEROIN. THE TEMPTATION IS AS STRONG WITHIN HER AS THE HORROR.
WATCH HER, LUV-- SHE'S OUR WEAK LINK.
YOU REALIZE, BOSS, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET US SIMPLY WALK OUT OF HERE WITH 'BERTO AND AMARA. WE NEED A PLAN.
AH FIGURED AH'D BE LIKE *INDIANA JONES* AN' MAKE ONE UP AS WE WENT ALONG.
WE'RE DOOMED.
IT'S STARTING.
TA RAN TARA
THAT WOMAN IN THE ARENA-- SHE'S MY FRIEND, *IVICH!*
ACTUALLY, THE IDEA IS TO GRAB THE KIDS AN' HAVE LILA TELE-PORT US ALL TO HER DYSON SPHERE. NO MUSS, NO FUSS-- IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, WE GONE.


MAKES SENSE -- AFTER THIS MORNING'S FIASCO, IT'LL BE A LONG WHILE BEFORE I TRUST MY OWN TELEPORTING TALENT AGAIN.
I WONDER IF I'LL EVER BE ABLE TO?
IT'S A FIERCELY FOUGHT DUEL --
-- IVICH'S FOE, A SHAPE-CHANGER --
-- THE TWO COMBATANTS EVENLY MATCHED...
...THE WOMAN'S KEEN BLADE MORE THAN COMPENSATED FOR...
... BY THE SNAKE'S BULK AND ARMOR-LIKE HIDE.
ONCE SHE'S DISARMED, HOWEVER...
...THE FIGHT'S AS GOOD AS OVER...
...UNTIL, WITHOUT WARNING...
IVICH!?!
ALI, DON'T! YOU'LL BLOW OUR COVER!


I'M SORRY, SAM-- SHE'S MY *FRIEND*. I WON'T ABANDON HER!
*DAZZLER!*
I'LL GENERATE A LIGHT AND COLOR BLAST TO *DAZZLE* THE BRUTE!
I *KNEW* YOU'D COME BACK!
YOUR LIGHTSHOW WON'T HOLD RAY LONG.
THIS'LL SEND HIM TO DREAM-LAND...
...AND THIS TO--!
KWAK!
*NO*, IVICH! I DIDN'T SAVE YOU JUST SO YOU COULD MURDER HIM!
WHAT D'YOU THINK WE'RE *HERE* FOR, SILLY-- THE NAME OF THE GAME IS KILL OR BE KILLED-- WE'RE PROFESSIONALS, THIS IS OUR JOB.
THAT'S WHY THOSE RUBES IN THE STANDS PAY TOP DOLLAR-- BECAUSE THIS IS *REAL!* THEY WANT FAKE, THEY'LL WATCH WRESTLING.
IF YOU'RE SQUEAMISH, HON, MOVE ASIDE-- HERE COMES THE MAIN EVENT! WISH ME LUCK, SEE YOU SOON!
*ALI CAN'T BELIEVE HER EYES--*
*--THAT THE WOMAN SHE KNEW COULD EVER BE A PARTY TO FIGHTING, OR KILLING, THESE INNOCENT CHILDREN.*
THWAM!
KRAK!
*THE MEN STRIKE IMMEDIATELY, WITH RUTHLESS FEROCITY AND, AT FIRST, THE MUTANTS ACT CONFUSED, UNSURE OF THEMSELVES OR WHAT TO DO.*


BUT THEN, THEIR TRAINING REASSERTS ITSELF--MAGMA COUNTER-ATTACKING...
...BY PULLING A FOUNTAIN OF MOLTEN ROCK FROM DEEP WITHIN THE EARTH TO CREATE A MINI-VOLCANO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ARENA.
TAKE A HIKE, HORSEFACE! THIS BOUT'S JUST BEEN CALLED!
WHAT THE HECK IS WITH AMARA?! SHE CAME CLOSE TO FRYIN' THAT WOMAN!
CRIPES--THIS REMINDS ME OF WHEN BOBBY 'N' ME WERE GLADIATORS IN NOVA ROMA! WE WERE DRUGGED, SO WE'D GO CRAZY IN THE COLISEUM AN' TRY TO KILL EACH OTHER EVEN THOUGH WE WERE BUDDIES!
HAS THE SAME HAPPENED HERE, TO THEM?!!
WHOUFLF!
I CAN'T LET YOU HURT ANYONE, MAGMA.
AS WITH THE SNAKE-MAN, ALISON'S BRILLIANT LIGHTSHOW DAZZLES THE YOUNG NOVA ROMANI--MOMENTARILY PARALYZING BOTH MIND AND BODY.
AT WHICH POINT, ALMOST ON CUE, EVERY EYE IN THE ARENA GOES FROM ITS FLOOR TO THE CEILING, AS--
MUTANTS!
HEED MY WORDS, AND OBEY!
RRRRRRRRRRRIPP!


I AM MAGNETO!
I HAVE COME, AT THE BEHEST OF YOUR *MENTOR*, TO SUMMON YOU TO THE *DEFENSE* OF YOUR WORLD!
TIME IS FLEETING--WE HAVE NONE TO WASTE--LET THOSE WHO WILL JOIN ME STEP FORWARD. TO THOSE WHO WILL NOT--HINDER US, INTERFERE IN ANY WAY, AT YOUR PERIL.
MAGNETO--HE'S A *VILLAIN*, BUT SOMETHIN' IN HIS VOICE MAKES ME BELIEVE HIM!
SUNSPOT, C'MON! HERE'S OUR TICKET OUTTA THIS MESS!
YOU GO, CANNONBALL. WE CANNOT.
WE MUST STAY WITH THE GLADIATORS, COMRADES. WE HAVE GOOD REASON.
YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, AMARA!
TRUST US, MAGIK, I BEG YOU. AS YOU DO WHAT YOU MUST, SO SHALL WE.
*AND, WITH THAT, THE GLADIATORS STEAL AWAY...*
THEIR CHOICE IS MADE, LAD. THERE IS NO MORE YOU CAN DO.
BULL! WE MIGHT'A *SAVED* 'EM, GIVEN A DECENT CHANCE!
WHATEVER'S GOING ON, MISTER, IT BETTER BE IMPORTANT, 'CAUSE IF YOU'RE SPINNING A LINE--!
YOU WILL SEE, CANNONBALL.
YOU WILL *LEARN*.
*TO BE CONTINUED--IN MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS II #1--AND THEN, IN NEW MUTANTS #30:*
The SINGER and her SONG

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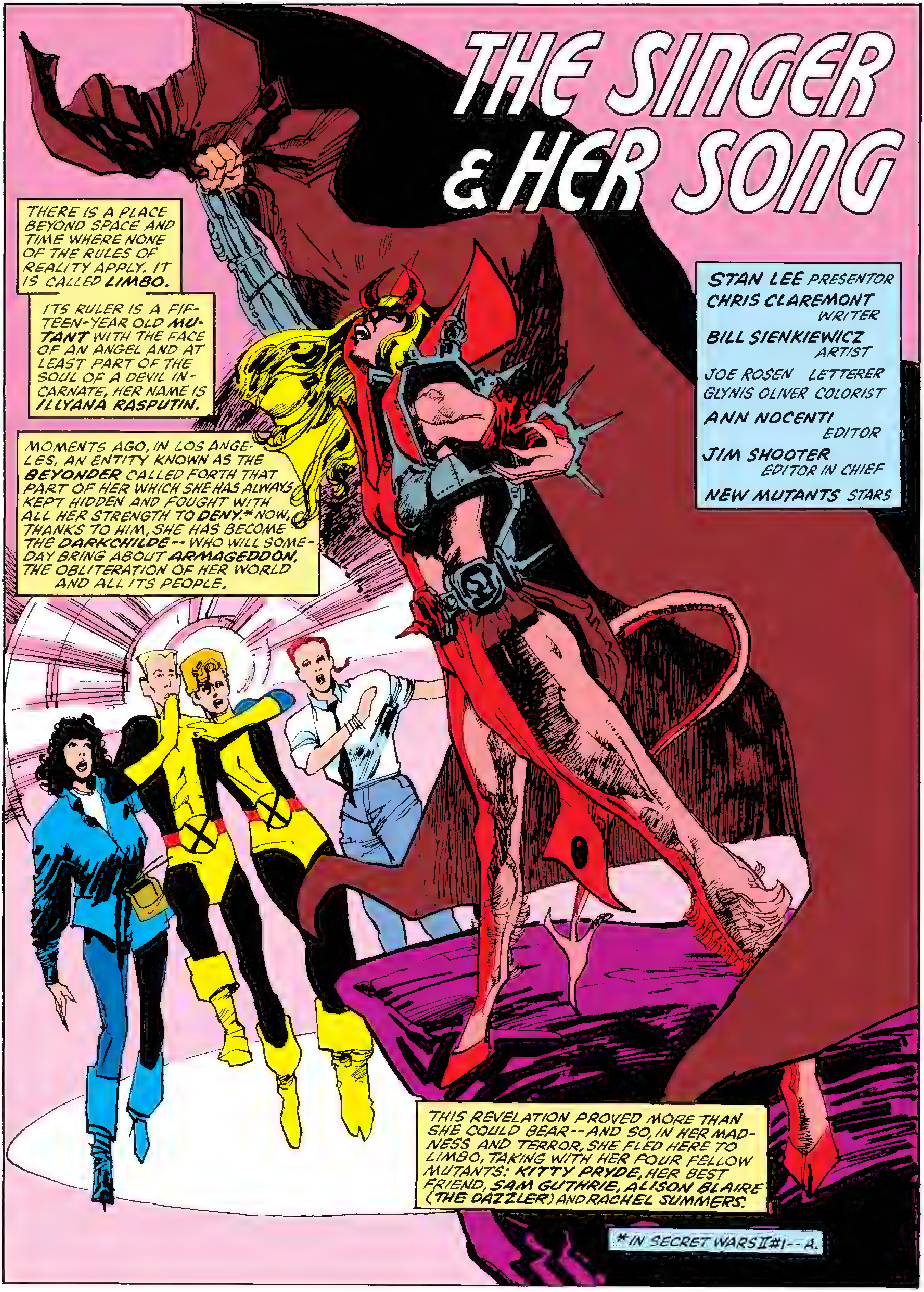
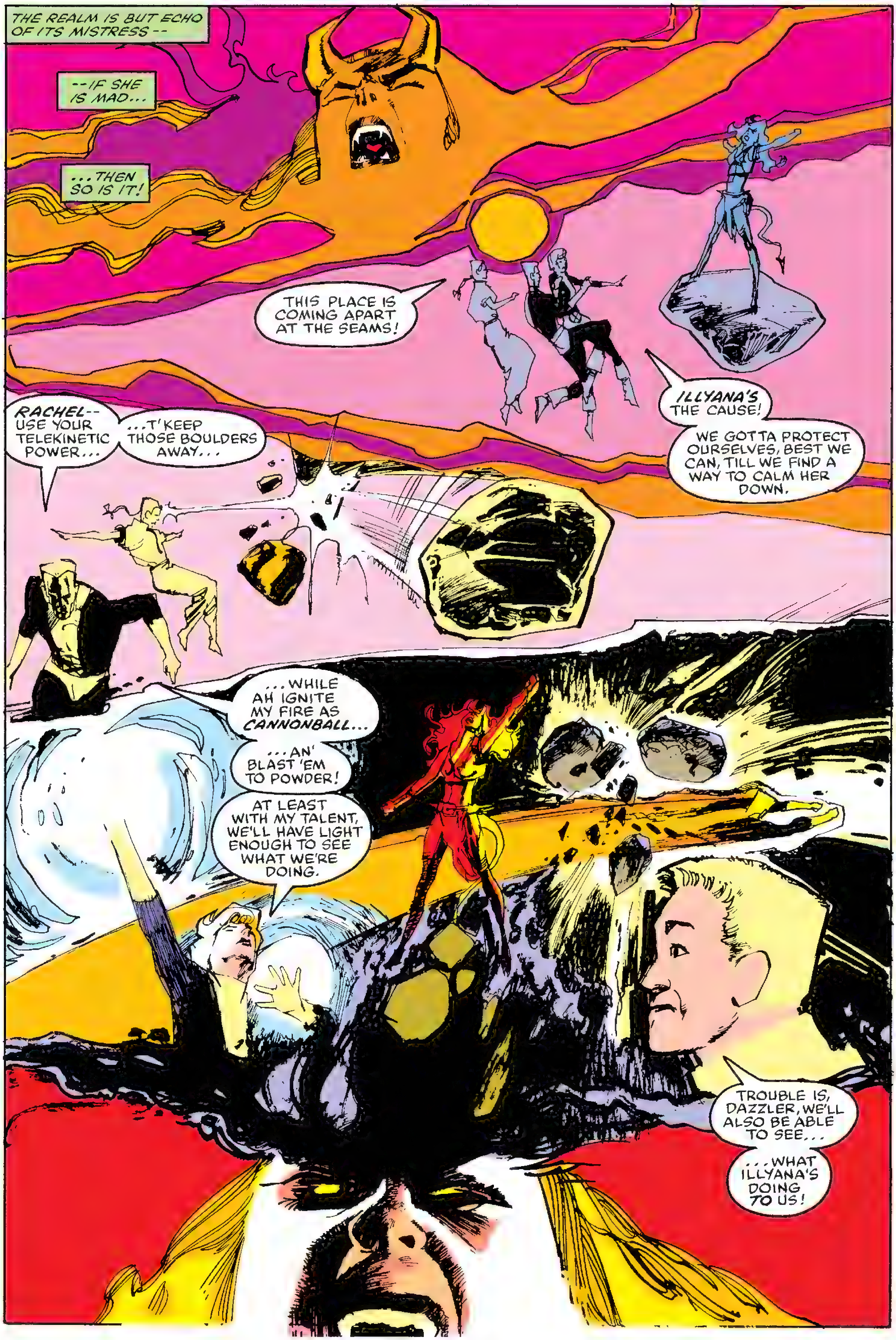
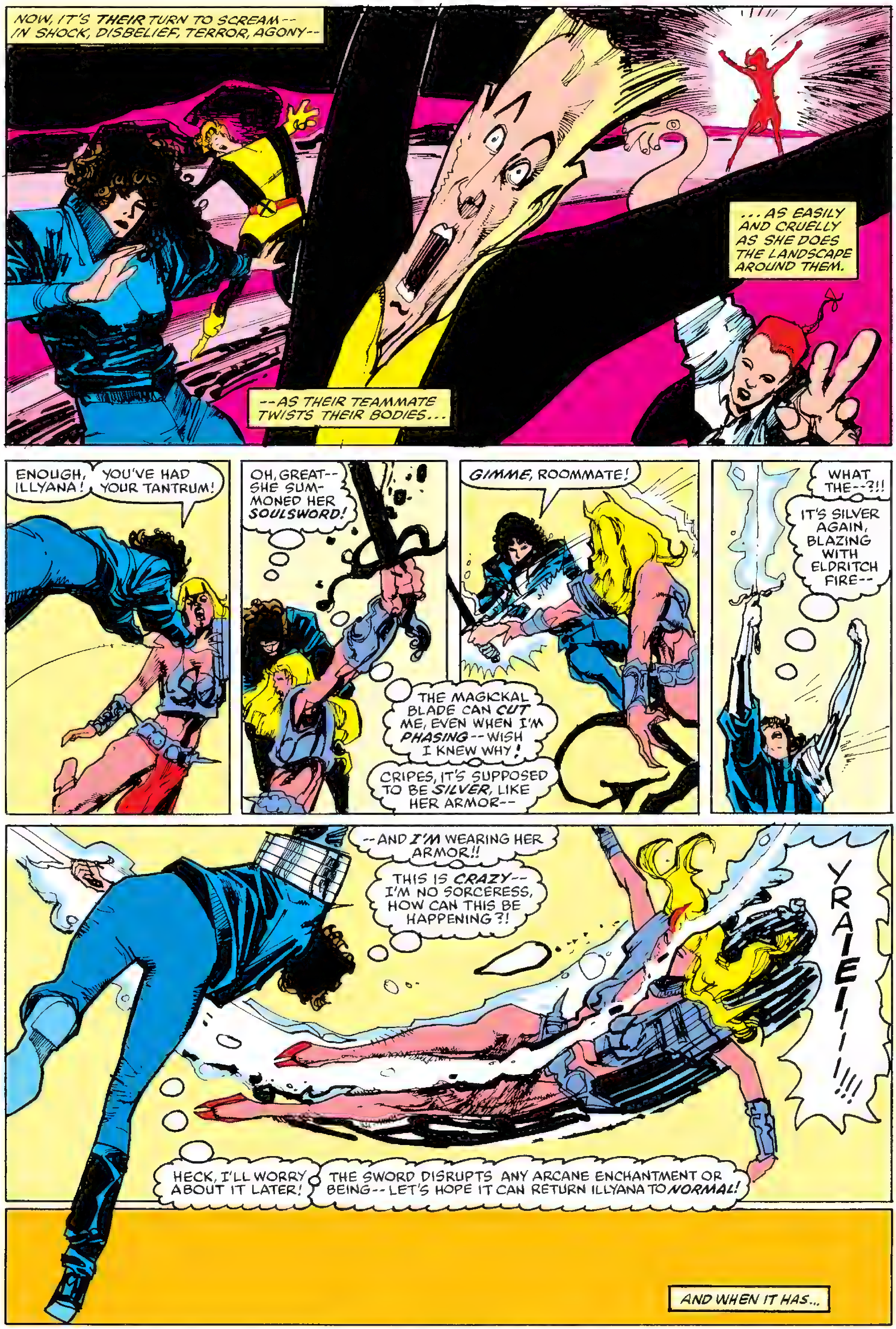
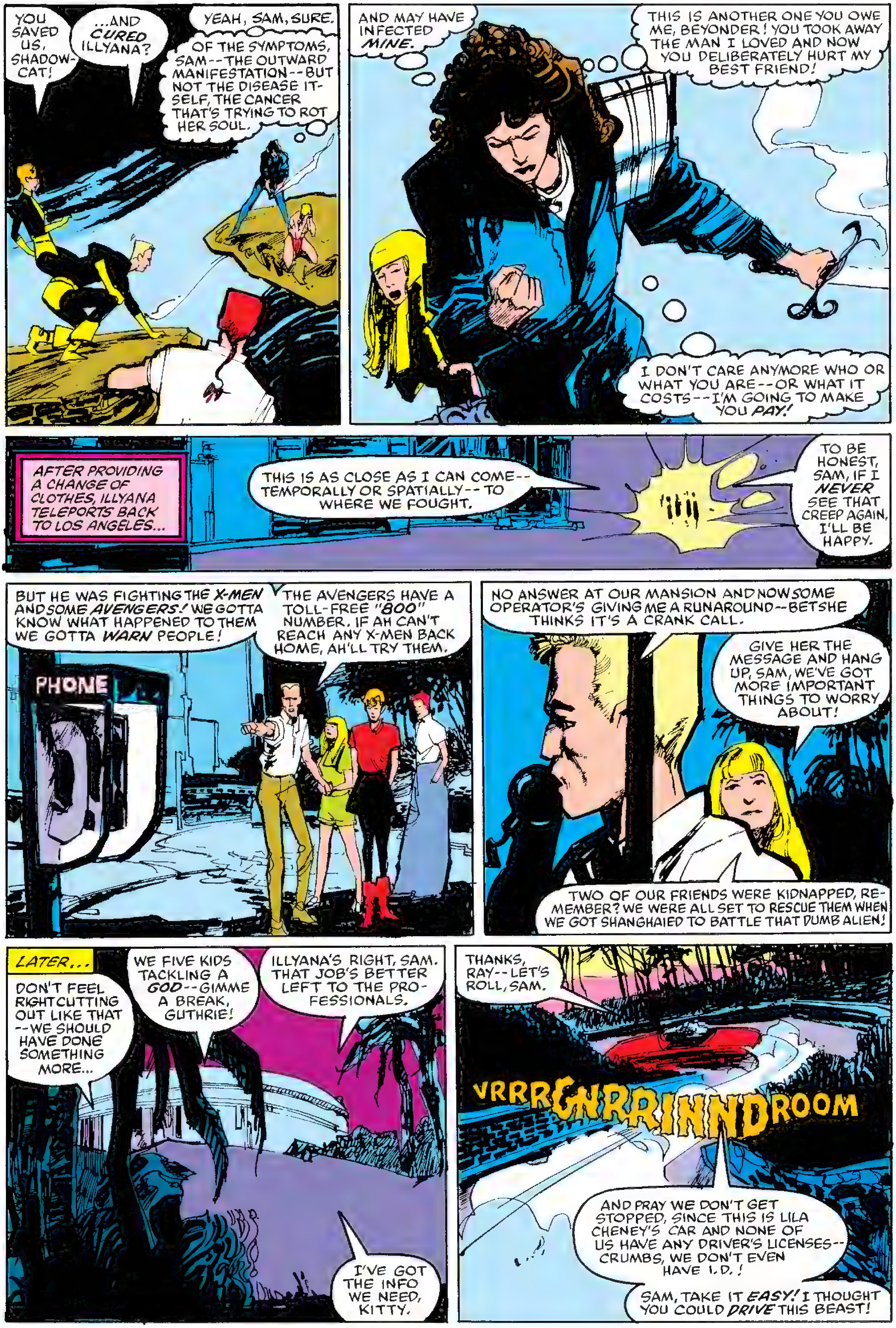
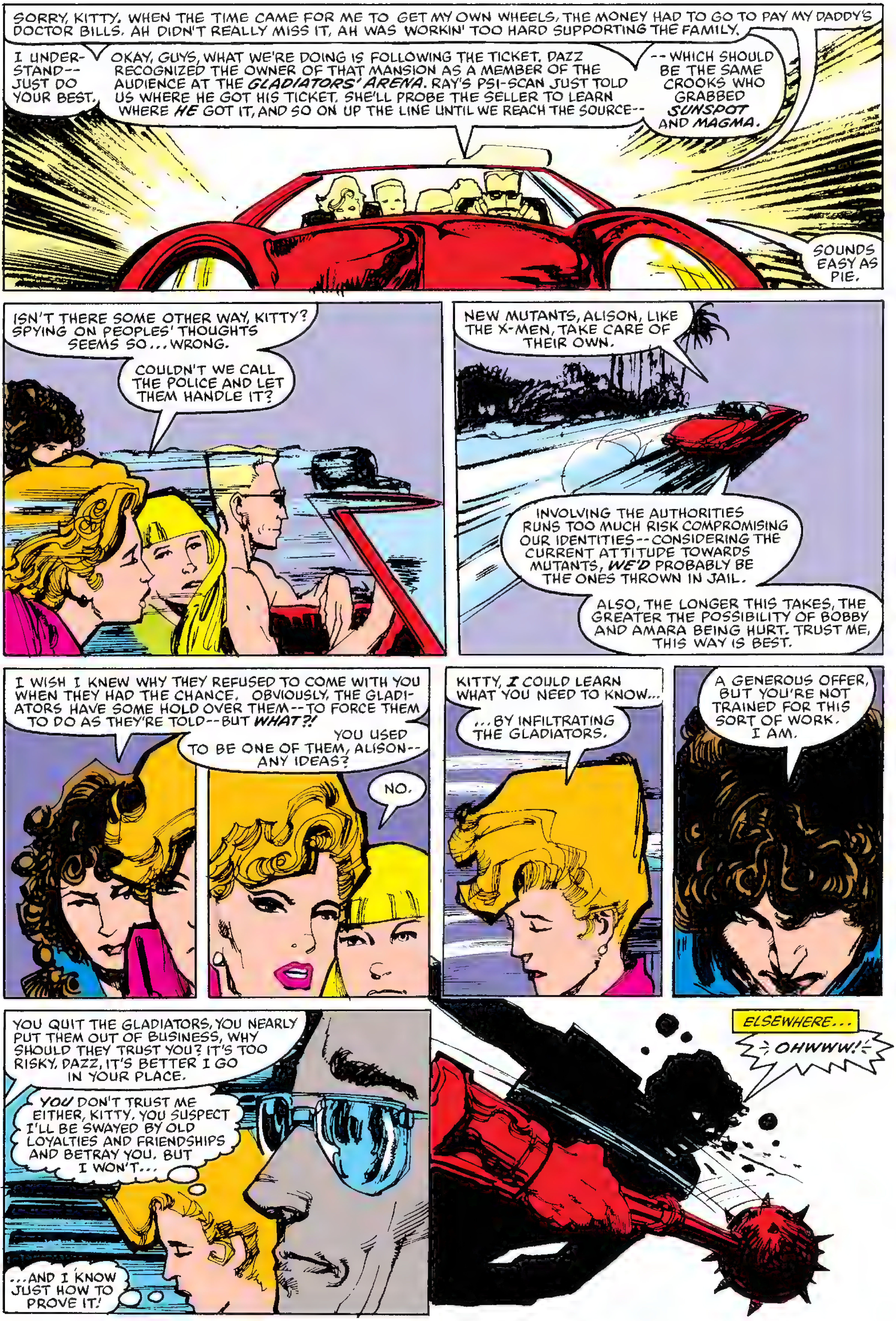
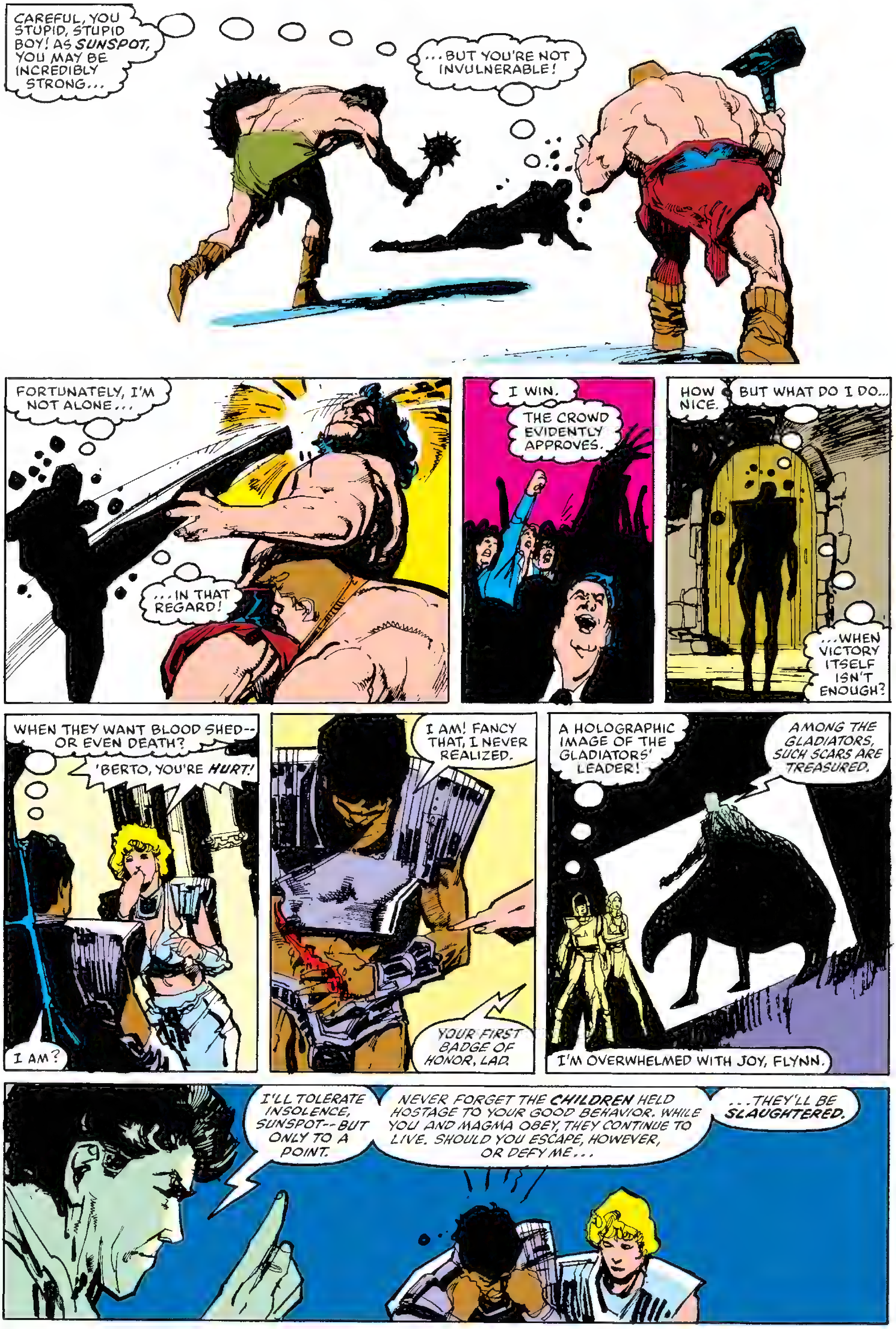

THE SINGER & HER SONG
STAN LEE PRESENTOR
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER
BILL SIENKIEWICZ ARTIST
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST
ANN NOCENTI EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF
NEW MUTANTS STARS
THERE IS A PLACE BEYOND SPACE AND TIME WHERE NONE OF THE RULES OF REALITY APPLY. IT IS CALLED LIMBO.
ITS RULER IS A FIFTEEN-YEAR OLD MUTANT WITH THE FACE OF AN ANGEL AND AT LEAST PART OF THE SOUL OF A DEVIL INCARNATE. HER NAME IS ILLYANA RASPUTIN.
MOMENTS AGO, IN LOS ANGELES, AN ENTITY KNOWN AS THE BEYONDER CALLED FORTH THAT PART OF HER WHICH SHE HAS ALWAYS KEPT HIDDEN AND FOUGHT WITH ALL HER STRENGTH TO DENY.* NOW, THANKS TO HIM, SHE HAS BECOME THE DARKCHILDE -- WHO WILL SOMEDAY BRING ABOUT ARMAGEDDON, THE OBLITERATION OF HER WORLD AND ALL ITS PEOPLE.
THIS REVELATION PROVED MORE THAN SHE COULD BEAR -- AND SO, IN HER MADNESS AND TERROR, SHE FLED HERE TO LIMBO, TAKING WITH HER FOUR FELLOW MUTANTS: KITTY PRYDE, HER BEST FRIEND, SAM GUTHRIE, ALISON BLAIRE (THE DAZZLER) AND RACHEL SUMMERS.
*IN SECRET WARS II #1 -- A.

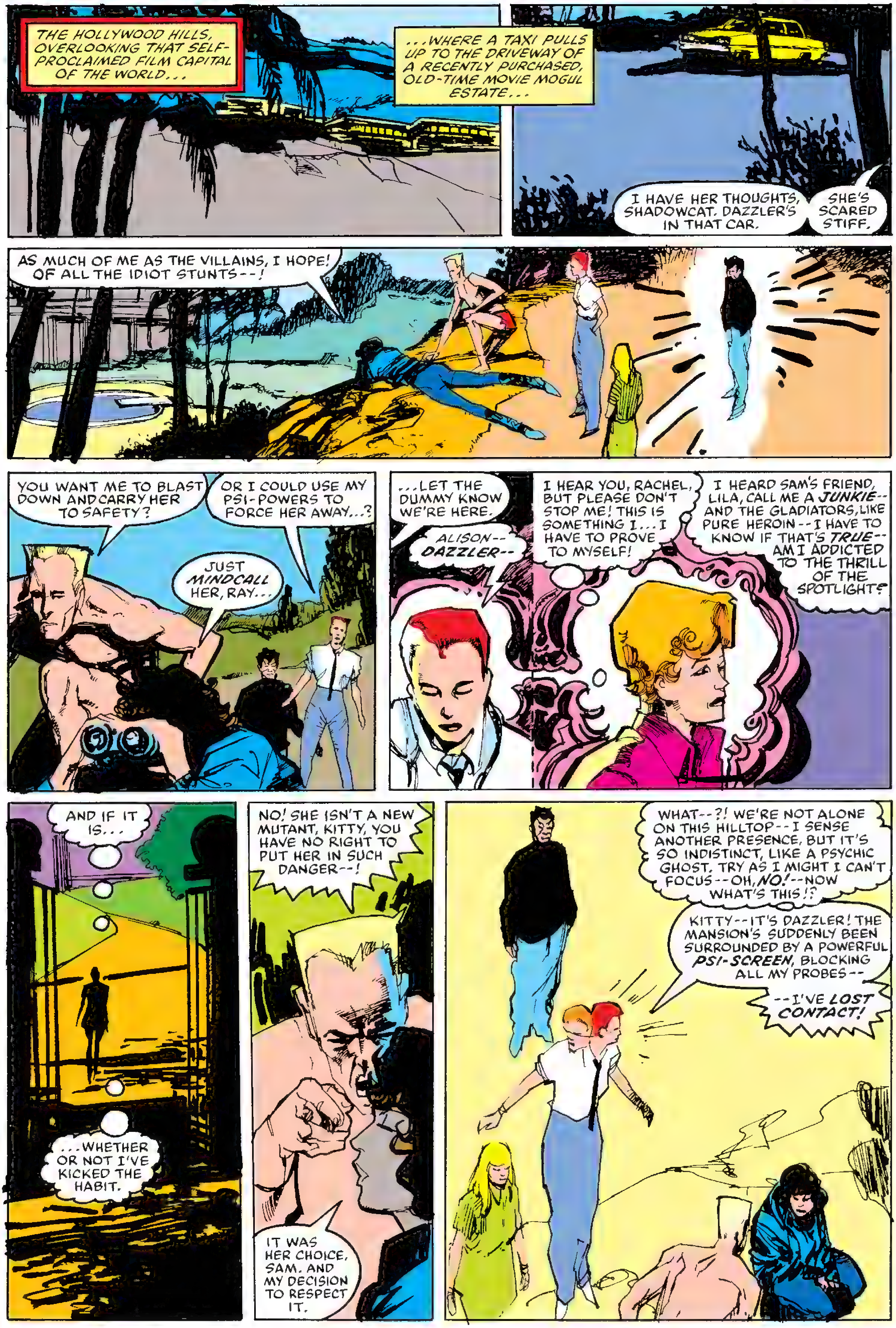

THE REALM IS BUT ECHO OF ITS MISTRESS--
--IF SHE IS MAD...
...THEN SO IS IT!
THIS PLACE IS COMING APART AT THE SEAMS!
ILLYANA'S THE CAUSE!
WE GOTTA PROTECT OURSELVES, BEST WE CAN, TILL WE FIND A WAY TO CALM HER DOWN.
RACHEL-- USE YOUR TELEKINETIC POWER...
...T'KEEP THOSE BOULDERS AWAY...
...WHILE AH IGNITE MY FIRE AS CANNONBALL...
...AN' BLAST 'EM TO POWDER!
AT LEAST WITH MY TALENT, WE'LL HAVE LIGHT ENOUGH TO SEE WHAT WE'RE DOING.
TROUBLE IS, DAZZLER, WE'LL ALSO BE ABLE TO SEE...
...WHAT ILLYANA'S DOING TO US!

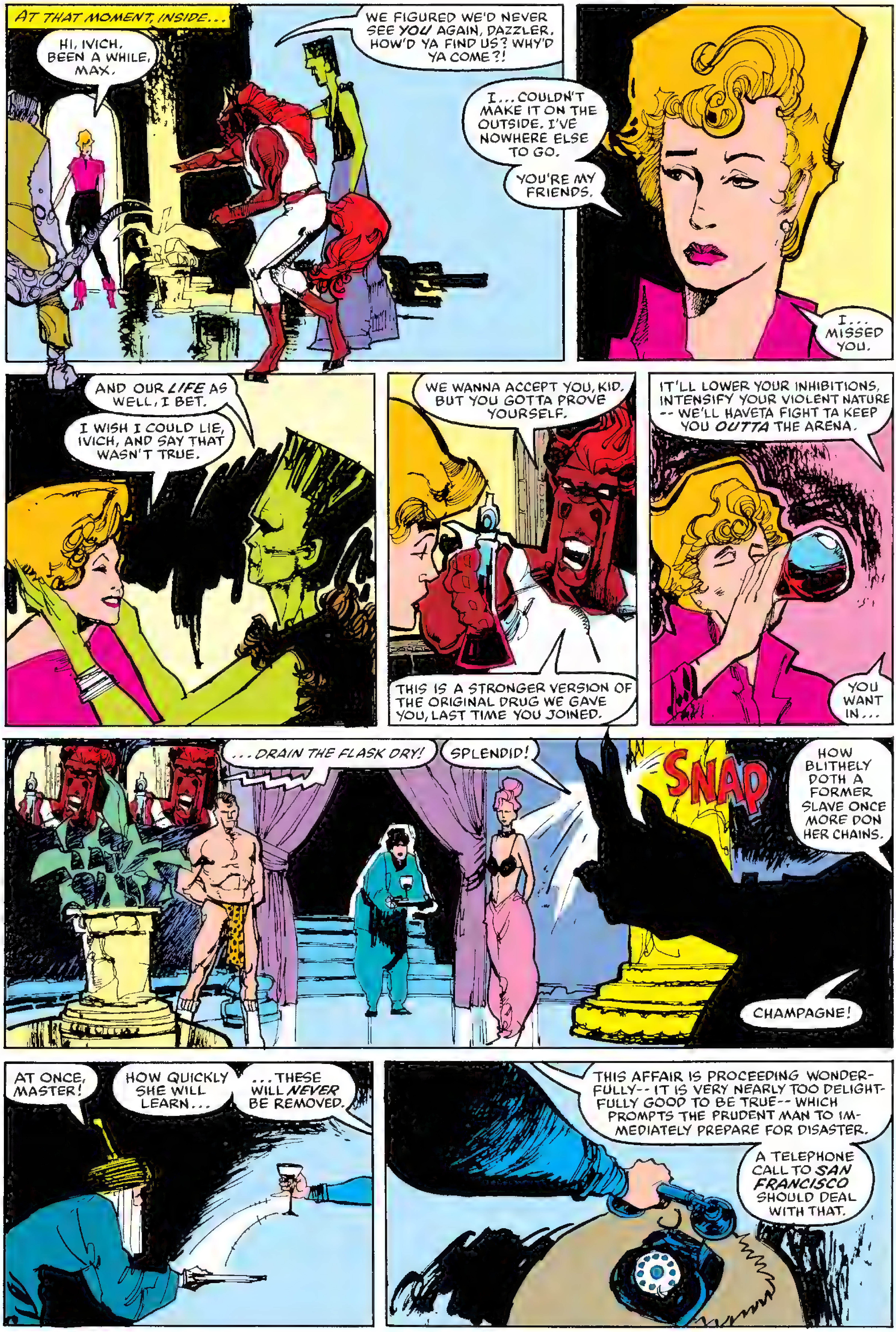

NOW, IT'S *THEIR* TURN TO SCREAM-- IN SHOCK, DISBELIEF, TERROR, AGONY--
--AS THEIR TEAMMATE TWISTS THEIR BODIES...
...AS EASILY AND CRUELLY AS SHE DOES THE LANDSCAPE AROUND THEM.
ENOUGH, ILLYANA!
YOU'VE HAD YOUR TANTRUM!
OH, GREAT-- SHE SUMMONED HER **SOULSWORD!**
THE MAGICKAL BLADE CAN **CUT** ME, EVEN WHEN I'M **PHASING**--WISH I KNEW WHY!
CRIPES, IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE **SILVER**, LIKE HER ARMOR--
*GIMME*, ROOMMATE!
WHAT THE--?!!
IT'S SILVER AGAIN, BLAZING WITH ELDRITCH FIRE--
--AND *I'M* WEARING HER ARMOR!!
THIS IS **CRAZY**-- I'M NO SORCERESS, HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?!
YRAIEIIII!!!
HECK, I'LL WORRY ABOUT IT LATER!
THE SWORD DISRUPTS ANY ARCANE ENCHANTMENT OR BEING-- LET'S HOPE IT CAN RETURN ILLYANA TO ***NORMAL!***
AND WHEN IT HAS...

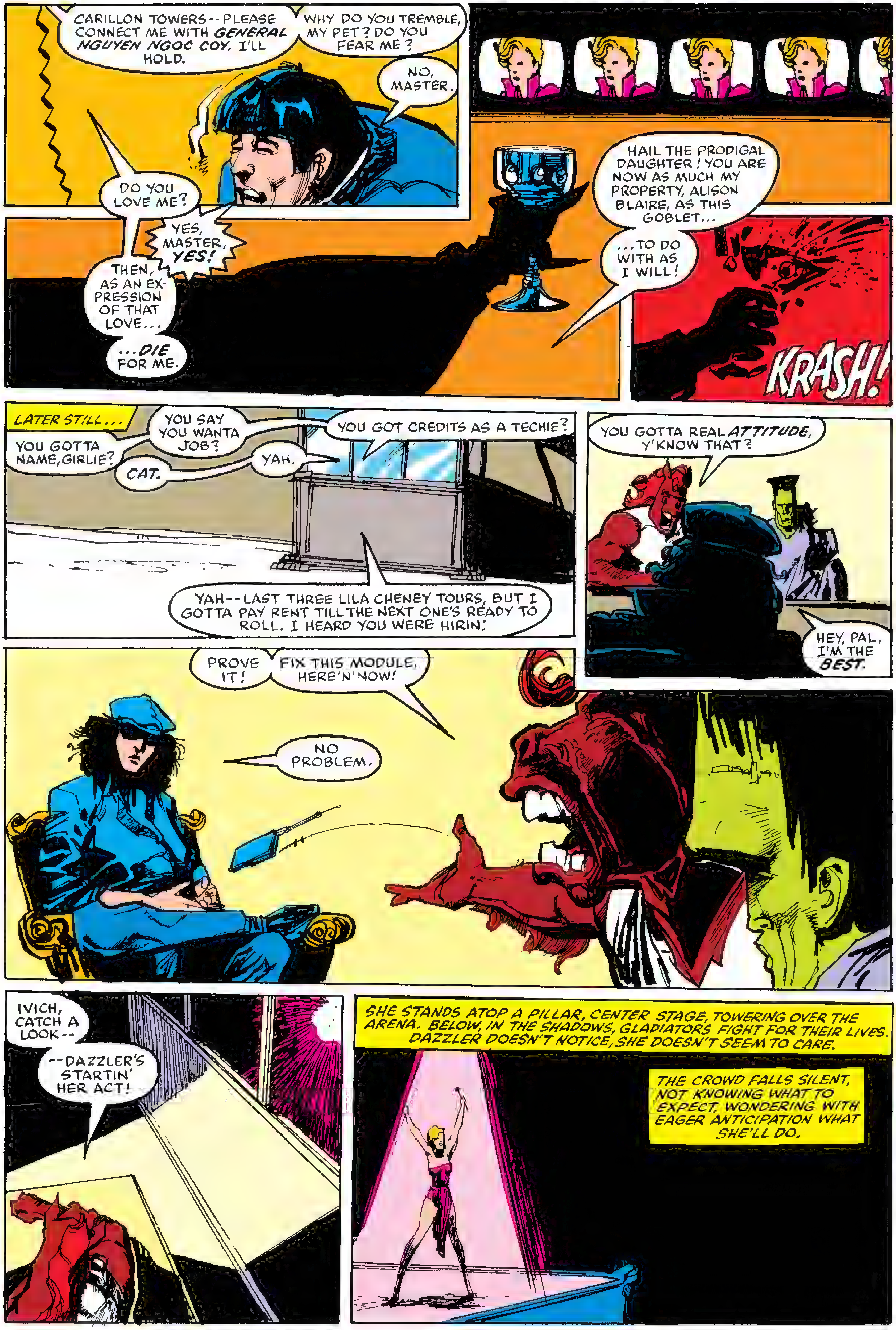

YOU SAVED US, SHADOWCAT!
...AND CURED ILLYANA?
YEAH, SAM, SURE.
OF THE SYMPTOMS, SAM--THE OUTWARD MANIFESTATION--BUT NOT THE DISEASE ITSELF, THE CANCER THAT'S TRYING TO ROT HER SOUL.
AND MAY HAVE INFECTED MINE.
THIS IS ANOTHER ONE YOU OWE ME, BEYONDER! YOU TOOK AWAY THE MAN I LOVED AND NOW YOU DELIBERATELY HURT MY BEST FRIEND!
I DON'T CARE ANYMORE WHO OR WHAT YOU ARE--OR WHAT IT COSTS--I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY!
AFTER PROVIDING A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, ILLYANA TELEPORTS BACK TO LOS ANGELES...
THIS IS AS CLOSE AS I CAN COME--TEMPORALLY OR SPATIALLY--TO WHERE WE FOUGHT.
TO BE HONEST, SAM, IF I NEVER SEE THAT CREEP AGAIN, I'LL BE HAPPY.
BUT HE WAS FIGHTING THE X-MEN AND SOME AVENGERS! WE GOTTA KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. WE GOTTA WARN PEOPLE!
THE AVENGERS HAVE A TOLL-FREE "800" NUMBER. IF AH CAN'T REACH ANY X-MEN BACK HOME, AH'LL TRY THEM.
PHONE
NO ANSWER AT OUR MANSION AND NOW SOME OPERATOR'S GIVING ME A RUNAROUND--BET SHE THINKS IT'S A CRANK CALL.
GIVE HER THE MESSAGE AND HANG UP, SAM. WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT!
TWO OF OUR FRIENDS WERE KIDNAPPED, REMEMBER? WE WERE ALL SET TO RESCUE THEM WHEN WE GOT SHANGHAIED TO BATTLE THAT DUMB ALIEN!
LATER...
DON'T FEEL RIGHT CUTTING OUT LIKE THAT--WE SHOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING MORE...
WE FIVE KIDS TACKLING A GOD--GIMME A BREAK, GUTHRIE!
ILLYANA'S RIGHT, SAM. THAT JOB'S BETTER LEFT TO THE PROFESSIONALS.
I'VE GOT THE INFO WE NEED, KITTY.
THANKS, RAY--LET'S ROLL, SAM.
VRRRGNRRRINNNDROOM
AND PRAY WE DON'T GET STOPPED, SINCE THIS IS LILA CHENEY'S CAR AND NONE OF US HAVE ANY DRIVER'S LICENSES--CRUMBS, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE I.D.!
SAM, TAKE IT EASY! I THOUGHT YOU COULD DRIVE THIS BEAST!

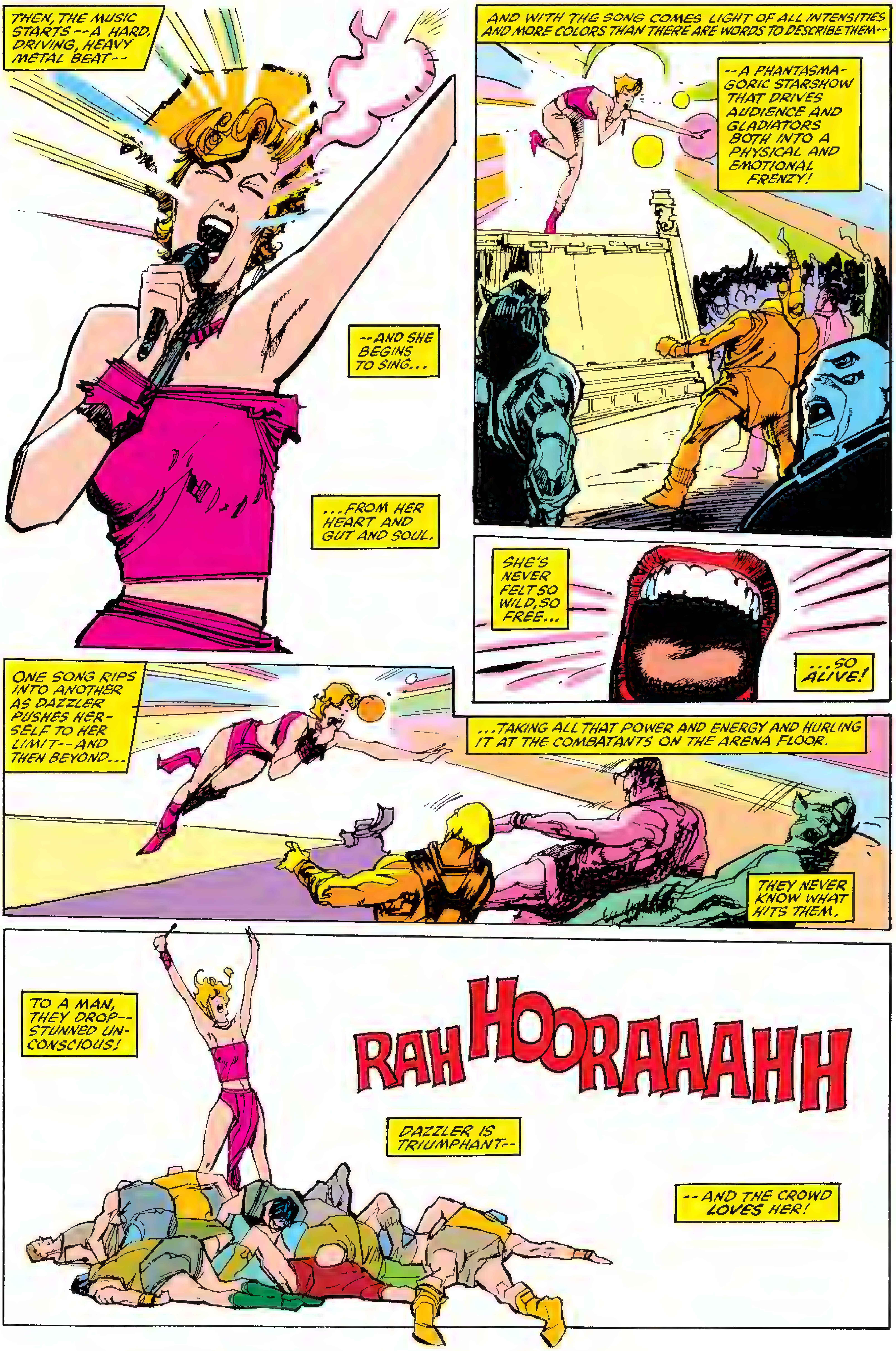

SORRY, KITTY. WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR ME TO GET MY OWN WHEELS, THE MONEY HAD TO GO TO PAY MY DADDY'S DOCTOR BILLS. AH DIDN'T REALLY MISS IT, AH WAS WORKIN' TOO HARD SUPPORTING THE FAMILY.
I UNDERSTAND-- JUST DO YOUR BEST.
OKAY, GUYS, WHAT WE'RE DOING IS FOLLOWING THE TICKET. DAZZ RECOGNIZED THE OWNER OF THAT MANSION AS A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE AT THE GLADIATORS' ARENA. RAY'S PSI-SCAN JUST TOLD US WHERE HE GOT HIS TICKET. SHE'LL PROBE THE SELLER TO LEARN WHERE HE GOT IT, AND SO ON UP THE LINE UNTIL WE REACH THE SOURCE--
--WHICH SHOULD BE THE SAME CROOKS WHO GRABBED SUNSPOT AND MAGMA.
SOUNDS EASY AS PIE.
ISN'T THERE SOME OTHER WAY, KITTY? SPYING ON PEOPLES' THOUGHTS SEEMS SO... WRONG.
COULDN'T WE CALL THE POLICE AND LET THEM HANDLE IT?
NEW MUTANTS, ALISON, LIKE THE X-MEN, TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN.
INVOLVING THE AUTHORITIES RUNS TOO MUCH RISK COMPROMISING OUR IDENTITIES--CONSIDERING THE CURRENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS MUTANTS, WE'D PROBABLY BE THE ONES THROWN IN JAIL.
ALSO, THE LONGER THIS TAKES, THE GREATER THE POSSIBILITY OF BOBBY AND AMARA BEING HURT. TRUST ME, THIS WAY IS BEST.
I WISH I KNEW WHY THEY REFUSED TO COME WITH YOU WHEN THEY HAD THE CHANCE. OBVIOUSLY, THE GLADIATORS HAVE SOME HOLD OVER THEM--TO FORCE THEM TO DO AS THEY'RE TOLD--BUT WHAT?!
YOU USED TO BE ONE OF THEM, ALISON-- ANY IDEAS?
NO.
KITTY, I COULD LEARN WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...
...BY INFILTRATING THE GLADIATORS.
A GENEROUS OFFER, BUT YOU'RE NOT TRAINED FOR THIS SORT OF WORK. I AM.
YOU QUIT THE GLADIATORS, YOU NEARLY PUT THEM OUT OF BUSINESS. WHY SHOULD THEY TRUST YOU? IT'S TOO RISKY, DAZZ, IT'S BETTER I GO IN YOUR PLACE.
YOU DON'T TRUST ME EITHER, KITTY. YOU SUSPECT I'LL BE SWAYED BY OLD LOYALTIES AND FRIENDSHIPS AND BETRAY YOU. BUT I WON'T...
...AND I KNOW JUST HOW TO PROVE IT!
ELSEWHERE...
OHWWW!

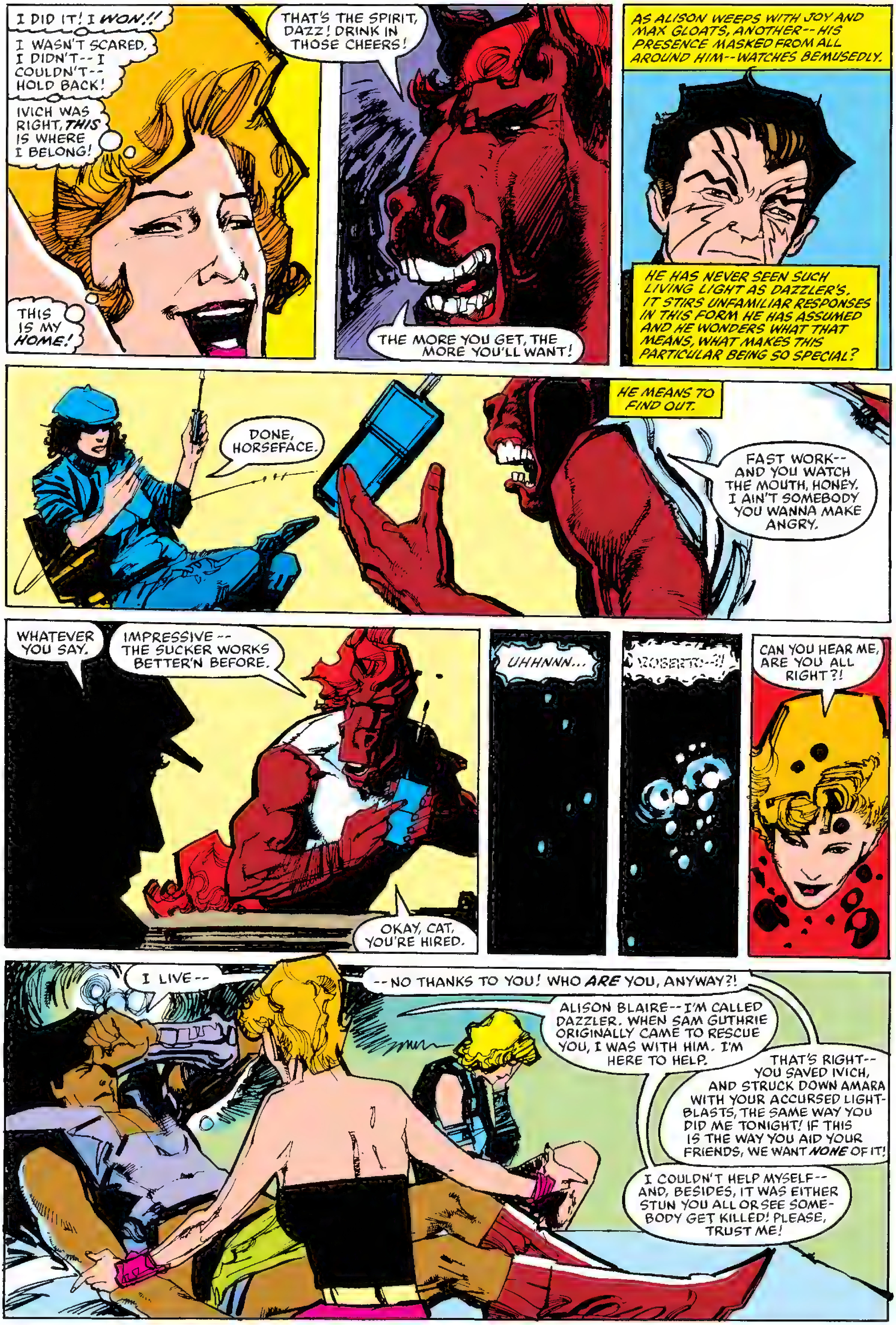

CAREFUL, YOU STUPID, STUPID BOY! AS **SUNSPOT**, YOU MAY BE INCREDIBLY STRONG...
...BUT YOU'RE NOT INVULNERABLE!
FORTUNATELY, I'M NOT ALONE...
...IN THAT REGARD!
I WIN.
THE CROWD EVIDENTLY APPROVES.
HOW NICE.
BUT WHAT DO I DO...
...WHEN VICTORY ITSELF ISN'T ENOUGH?
WHEN THEY WANT BLOOD SHED--OR EVEN DEATH?
'BERTO, YOU'RE ***HURT!***
I AM?
I AM! FANCY THAT, I NEVER REALIZED.
*YOUR FIRST BADGE OF HONOR, LAD.*
A HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE OF THE GLADIATORS' LEADER!
*AMONG THE GLADIATORS, SUCH SCARS ARE TREASURED.*
I'M OVERWHELMED WITH JOY, FLYNN.
*I'LL TOLERATE INSOLENCE, SUNSPOT--BUT ONLY TO A POINT.*
*NEVER FORGET THE* ***CHILDREN*** *HELD HOSTAGE TO YOUR GOOD BEHAVIOR. WHILE YOU AND MAGMA OBEY, THEY CONTINUE TO LIVE. SHOULD YOU ESCAPE, HOWEVER, OR DEFY ME...*
*...THEY'LL BE* ***SLAUGHTERED.***

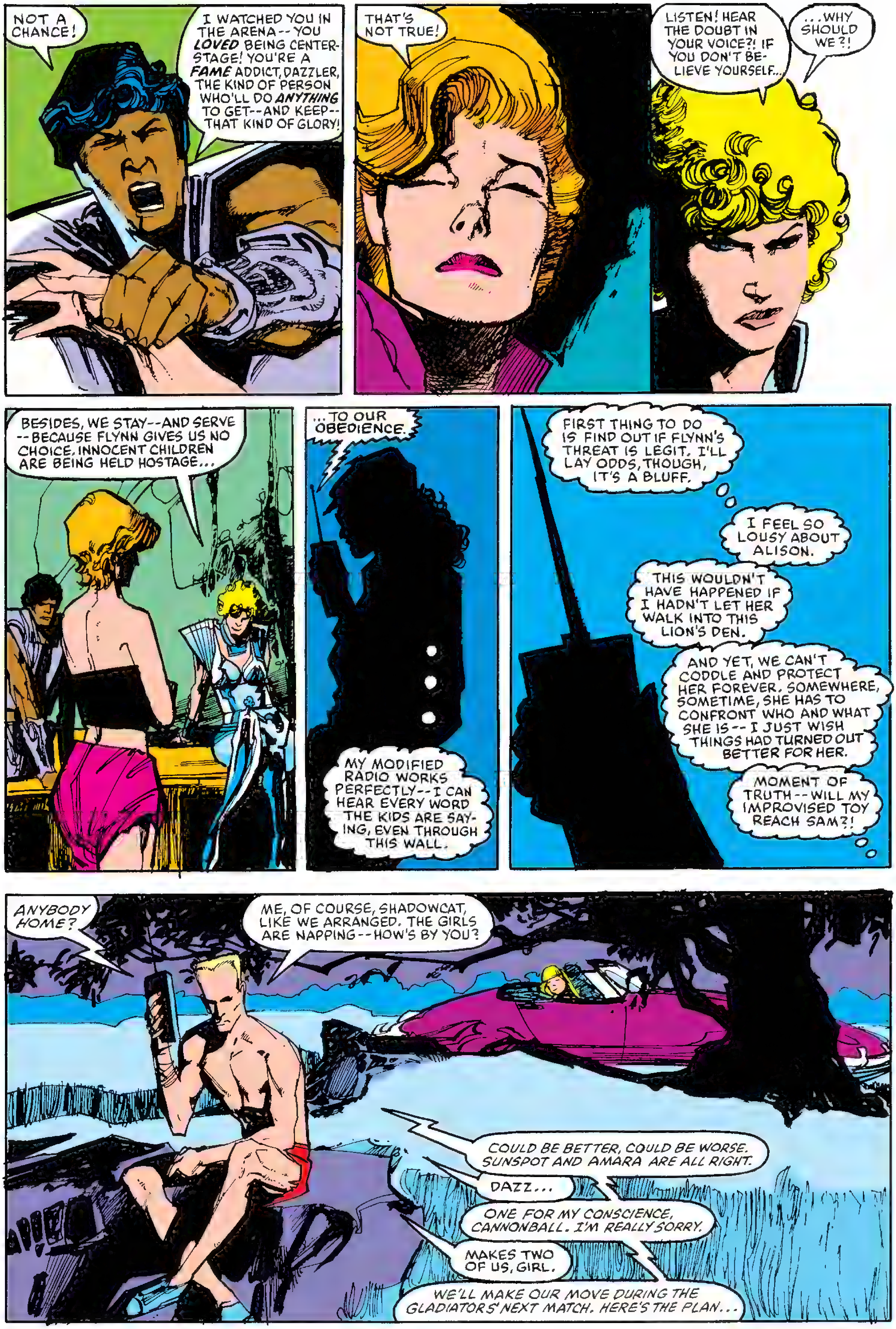

THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS, OVERLOOKING THAT SELF-PROCLAIMED FILM CAPITAL OF THE WORLD...
...WHERE A TAXI PULLS UP TO THE DRIVEWAY OF A RECENTLY PURCHASED, OLD-TIME MOVIE MOGUL ESTATE...
I HAVE HER THOUGHTS, SHADOWCAT. DAZZLER'S IN THAT CAR.
SHE'S SCARED STIFF.
AS MUCH OF ME AS THE VILLAINS, I HOPE! OF ALL THE IDIOT STUNTS--!
YOU WANT ME TO BLAST DOWN AND CARRY HER TO SAFETY?
OR I COULD USE MY PSI-POWERS TO FORCE HER AWAY...?
JUST *MINDCALL* HER, RAY...
...LET THE DUMMY KNOW WE'RE HERE.
ALISON-- *DAZZLER*--
I HEAR YOU, RACHEL, BUT PLEASE DON'T STOP ME! THIS IS SOMETHING I... I HAVE TO PROVE TO MYSELF!
I HEARD SAM'S FRIEND, LILA, CALL ME A *JUNKIE*-- AND THE GLADIATORS, LIKE PURE HEROIN--I HAVE TO KNOW IF THAT'S *TRUE*-- AM I ADDICTED TO THE THRILL OF THE SPOTLIGHT?
AND IF IT IS...
...WHETHER OR NOT I'VE KICKED THE HABIT.
NO! SHE ISN'T A NEW MUTANT, KITTY. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO PUT HER IN SUCH DANGER--!
IT WAS HER CHOICE, SAM. AND MY DECISION TO RESPECT IT.
WHAT--?! WE'RE NOT ALONE ON THIS HILLTOP--I SENSE ANOTHER PRESENCE, BUT IT'S SO INDISTINCT, LIKE A PSYCHIC GHOST. TRY AS I MIGHT I CAN'T FOCUS--OH, *NO!*--NOW WHAT'S THIS!?
KITTY--IT'S DAZZLER! THE MANSION'S SUDDENLY BEEN SURROUNDED BY A POWERFUL *PSI-SCREEN*, BLOCKING ALL MY PROBES--
--I'VE *LOST CONTACT!*

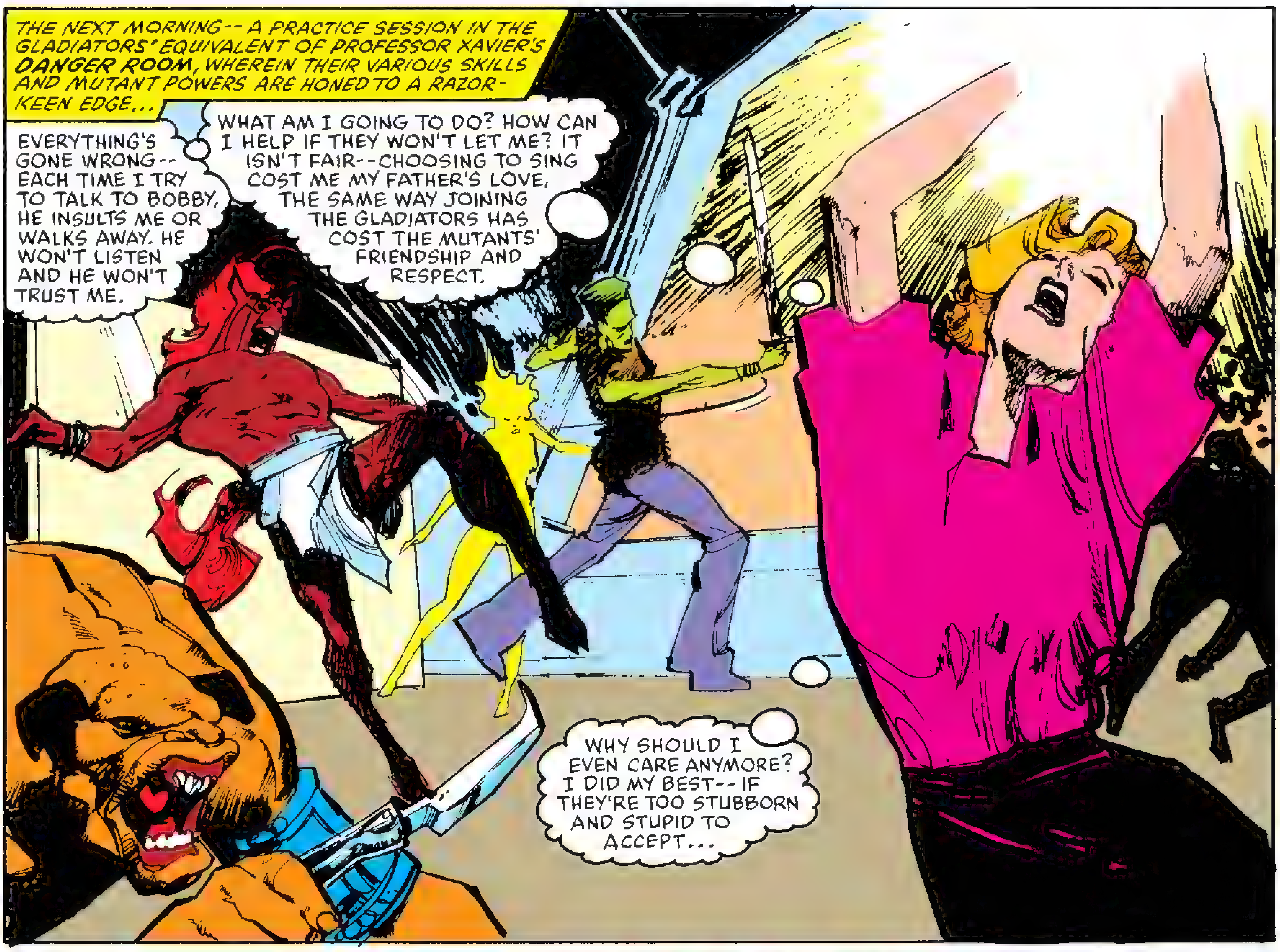

AT THAT MOMENT, INSIDE...
HI, IVICH. BEEN A WHILE, MAX.
WE FIGURED WE'D NEVER SEE *YOU* AGAIN, DAZZLER. HOW'D YA FIND US? WHY'D YA COME?!
I... COULDN'T MAKE IT ON THE OUTSIDE. I'VE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
YOU'RE MY FRIENDS.
I... MISSED YOU.
AND OUR *LIFE* AS WELL, I BET.
I WISH I COULD LIE, IVICH, AND SAY THAT WASN'T TRUE.
WE WANNA ACCEPT YOU, KID. BUT YOU GOTTA PROVE YOURSELF.
THIS IS A STRONGER VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL DRUG WE GAVE YOU, LAST TIME YOU JOINED.
IT'LL LOWER YOUR INHIBITIONS, INTENSIFY YOUR VIOLENT NATURE -- WE'LL HAVETA FIGHT TA KEEP YOU *OUTTA* THE ARENA.
YOU WANT IN...
...DRAIN THE FLASK DRY!
SPLENDID!
SNAP
HOW BLITHELY DOTH A FORMER SLAVE ONCE MORE DON HER CHAINS.
CHAMPAGNE!
AT ONCE, MASTER!
HOW QUICKLY SHE WILL LEARN...
...THESE WILL *NEVER* BE REMOVED.
THIS AFFAIR IS PROCEEDING WONDERFULLY-- IT IS VERY NEARLY TOO DELIGHTFULLY GOOD TO BE TRUE-- WHICH PROMPTS THE PRUDENT MAN TO IMMEDIATELY PREPARE FOR DISASTER.
A TELEPHONE CALL TO *SAN FRANCISCO* SHOULD DEAL WITH THAT.

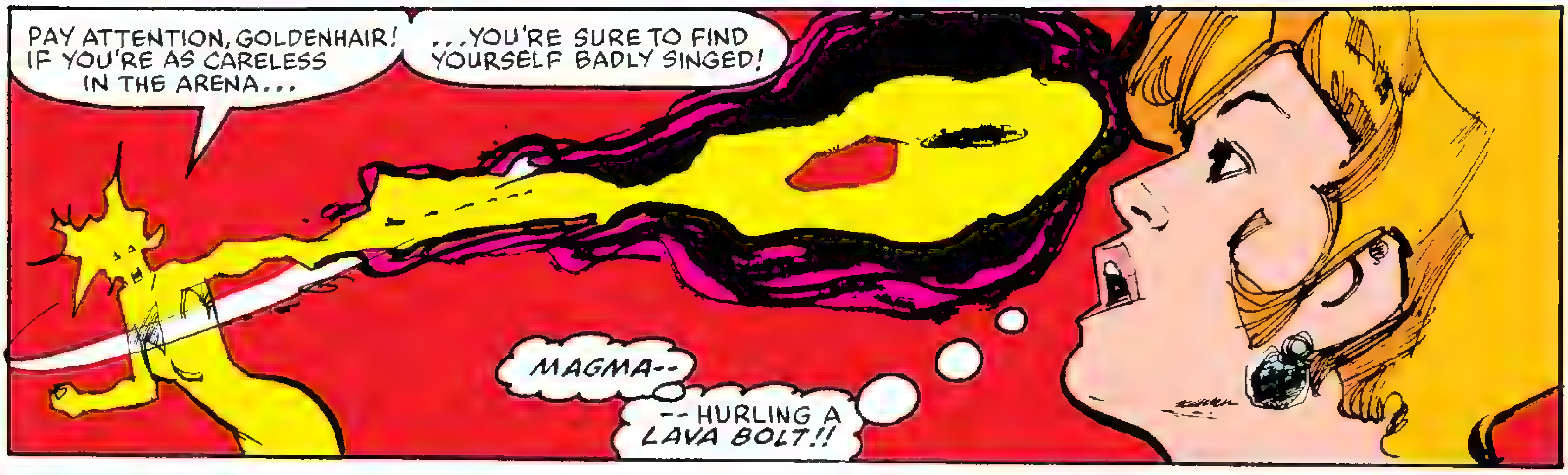

CARILLON TOWERS--PLEASE CONNECT ME WITH *GENERAL NGUYEN NGOC COY.* I'LL HOLD.
WHY DO YOU TREMBLE, MY PET? DO YOU FEAR ME?
NO, MASTER.
DO YOU LOVE ME?
YES, MASTER, *YES!*
THEN, AS AN EXPRESSION OF THAT LOVE...
...*DIE* FOR ME.
HAIL THE PRODIGAL DAUGHTER! YOU ARE NOW AS MUCH MY PROPERTY, ALISON BLAIRE, AS THIS GOBLET...
...TO DO WITH AS I WILL!
KRASH!
*LATER STILL...*
YOU GOTTA NAME, GIRLIE?
CAT.
YOU SAY YOU WANTA JOB?
YAH.
YOU GOT CREDITS AS A TECHIE?
YAH--LAST THREE LILA CHENEY TOURS, BUT I GOTTA PAY RENT TILL THE NEXT ONE'S READY TO ROLL. I HEARD YOU WERE HIRIN'.
YOU GOTTA REAL *ATTITUDE*, Y'KNOW THAT?
HEY, PAL, I'M THE *BEST*.
PROVE IT!
FIX THIS MODULE, HERE'N'NOW!
NO PROBLEM.
IVICH, CATCH A LOOK--
--DAZZLER'S STARTIN' HER ACT!
*SHE STANDS ATOP A PILLAR, CENTER STAGE, TOWERING OVER THE ARENA. BELOW, IN THE SHADOWS, GLADIATORS FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES. DAZZLER DOESN'T NOTICE, SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO CARE.*
*THE CROWD FALLS SILENT, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT, WONDERING WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION WHAT SHE'LL DO.*

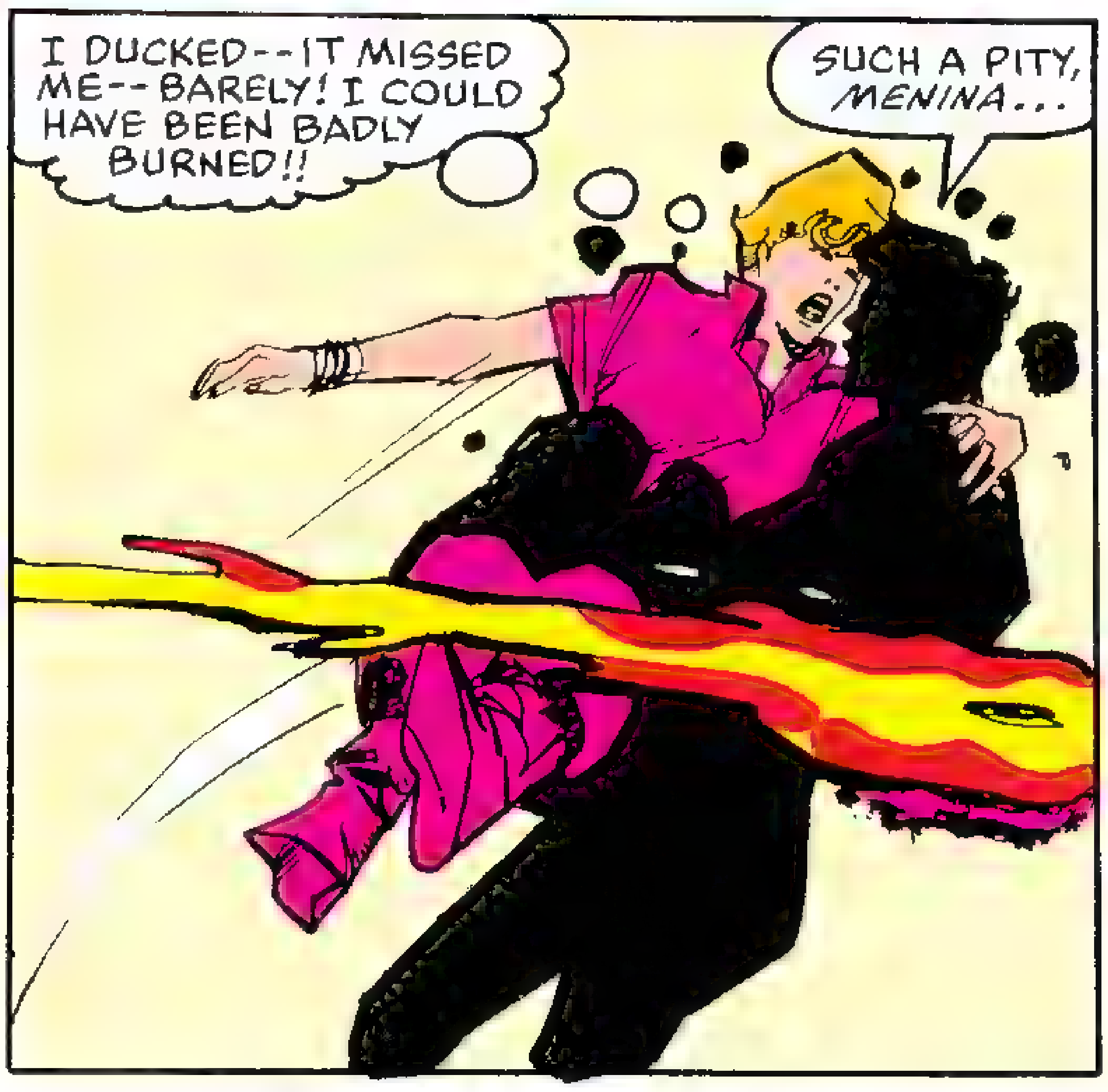

THEN, THE MUSIC STARTS--A HARD, DRIVING, HEAVY METAL BEAT--
--AND SHE BEGINS TO SING...
...FROM HER HEART AND GUT AND SOUL.
AND WITH THE SONG COMES LIGHT OF ALL INTENSITIES AND MORE COLORS THAN THERE ARE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THEM--
--A PHANTASMAGORIC STARSHOW THAT DRIVES AUDIENCE AND GLADIATORS BOTH INTO A PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL FRENZY!
SHE'S NEVER FELT SO WILD, SO FREE...
...SO ALIVE!
ONE SONG RIPS INTO ANOTHER AS DAZZLER PUSHES HERSELF TO HER LIMIT--AND THEN BEYOND...
...TAKING ALL THAT POWER AND ENERGY AND HURLING IT AT THE COMBATANTS ON THE ARENA FLOOR.
THEY NEVER KNOW WHAT HITS THEM.
TO A MAN, THEY DROP--STUNNED UNCONSCIOUS!
RAH HOORAAAHH
DAZZLER IS TRIUMPHANT--
--AND THE CROWD LOVES HER!

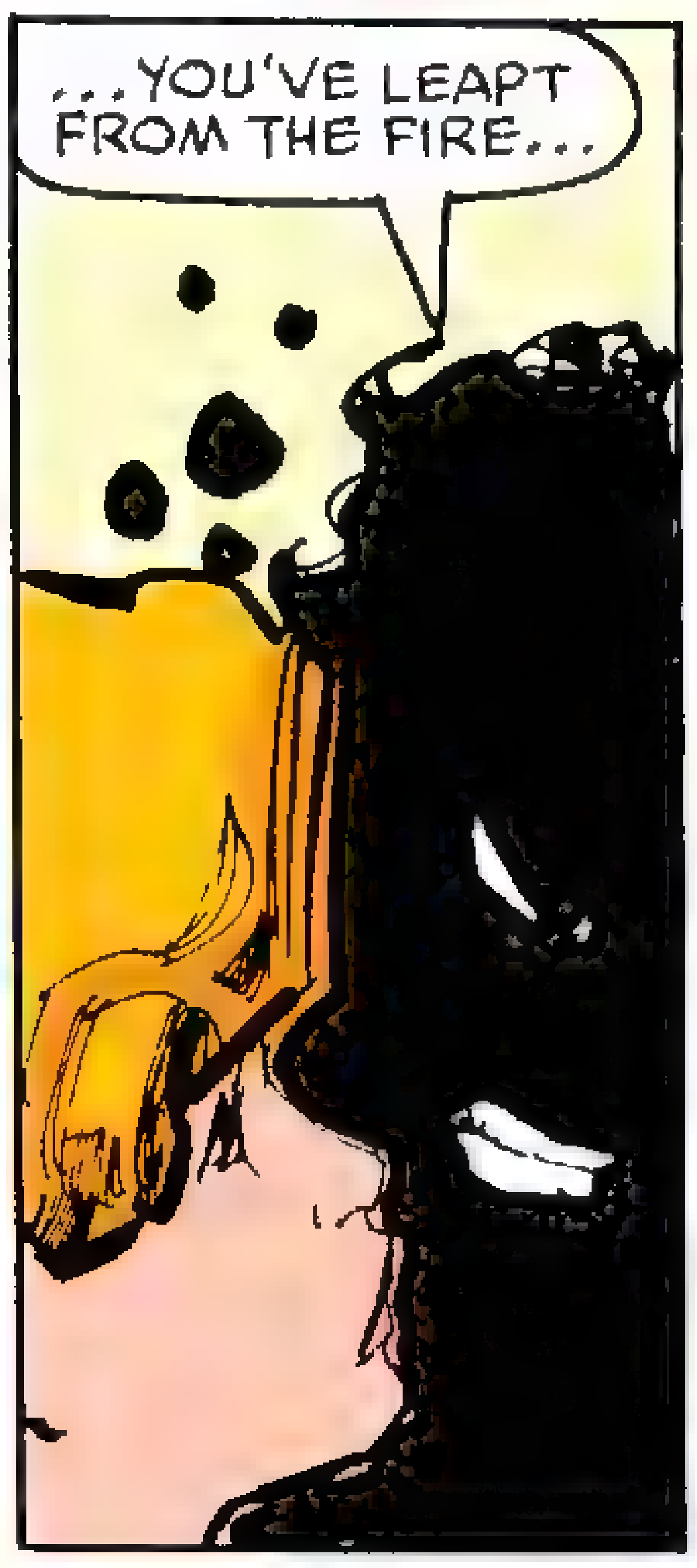

I DID IT! I *WON!!*
I WASN'T SCARED, I DIDN'T-- I COULDN'T-- HOLD BACK!
IVICH WAS RIGHT, *THIS* IS WHERE I BELONG!
THIS IS MY *HOME!*
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, DAZZ! DRINK IN THOSE CHEERS!
THE MORE YOU GET, THE MORE YOU'LL WANT!
*AS ALISON WEEPS WITH JOY AND MAX GLOATS, ANOTHER-- HIS PRESENCE MASKED FROM ALL AROUND HIM-- WATCHES BEMUSEDLY.*
*HE HAS NEVER SEEN SUCH LIVING LIGHT AS DAZZLER'S. IT STIRS UNFAMILIAR RESPONSES IN THIS FORM HE HAS ASSUMED AND HE WONDERS WHAT THAT MEANS, WHAT MAKES THIS PARTICULAR BEING SO SPECIAL?*
DONE, HORSEFACE.
*HE MEANS TO FIND OUT.*
FAST WORK-- AND YOU WATCH THE MOUTH, HONEY. I AIN'T SOMEBODY YOU WANNA MAKE ANGRY.
WHATEVER YOU SAY.
IMPRESSIVE-- THE SUCKER WORKS BETTER'N BEFORE.
OKAY, CAT, YOU'RE HIRED.
*UHHNNN...*
ROBERTO--?!
CAN YOU HEAR ME, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
I LIVE--
--NO THANKS TO YOU! WHO *ARE* YOU, ANYWAY?!
ALISON BLAIRE-- I'M CALLED DAZZLER. WHEN SAM GUTHRIE ORIGINALLY CAME TO RESCUE YOU, I WAS WITH HIM. I'M HERE TO HELP.
THAT'S RIGHT-- YOU SAVED IVICH, AND STRUCK DOWN AMARA WITH YOUR ACCURSED LIGHT-BLASTS, THE SAME WAY YOU DID ME TONIGHT! IF THIS IS THE WAY YOU AID YOUR FRIENDS, WE WANT *NONE* OF IT!
I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF-- AND, BESIDES, IT WAS EITHER STUN YOU ALL OR SEE SOMEBODY GET KILLED! PLEASE, TRUST ME!

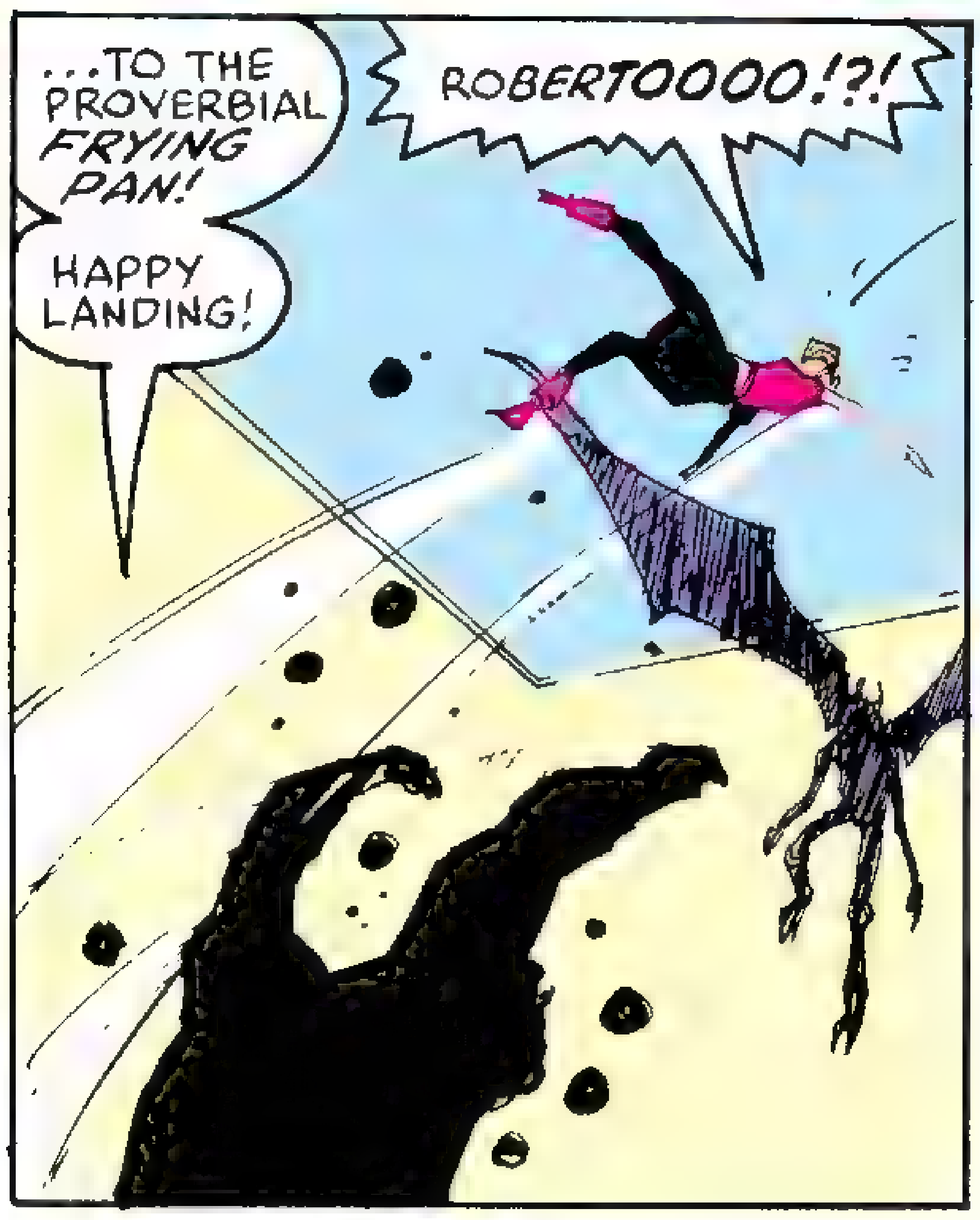

NOT A CHANCE!
I WATCHED YOU IN THE ARENA--YOU *LOVED* BEING CENTER-STAGE! YOU'RE A *FAME* ADDICT, DAZZLER, THE KIND OF PERSON WHO'LL DO *ANYTHING* TO GET--AND KEEP--THAT KIND OF GLORY!
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
LISTEN! HEAR THE DOUBT IN YOUR VOICE?! IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE YOURSELF...
...WHY SHOULD WE?!
BESIDES, WE STAY--AND SERVE--BECAUSE FLYNN GIVES US NO CHOICE. INNOCENT CHILDREN ARE BEING HELD HOSTAGE...
...TO OUR OBEDIENCE.
MY MODIFIED RADIO WORKS PERFECTLY--I CAN HEAR EVERY WORD THE KIDS ARE SAYING, EVEN THROUGH THIS WALL.
FIRST THING TO DO IS FIND OUT IF FLYNN'S THREAT IS LEGIT. I'LL LAY ODDS, THOUGH, IT'S A BLUFF.
I FEEL SO LOUSY ABOUT ALISON.
THIS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF I HADN'T LET HER WALK INTO THIS LION'S DEN.
AND YET, WE CAN'T CODDLE AND PROTECT HER FOREVER. SOMEWHERE, SOMETIME, SHE HAS TO CONFRONT WHO AND WHAT SHE IS--I JUST WISH THINGS HAD TURNED OUT BETTER FOR HER.
MOMENT OF TRUTH--WILL MY IMPROVISED TOY REACH SAM?!
ANYBODY HOME?
ME, OF COURSE, SHADOWCAT, LIKE WE ARRANGED. THE GIRLS ARE NAPPING--HOW'S BY YOU?
COULD BE BETTER, COULD BE WORSE. SUNSPOT AND AMARA ARE ALL RIGHT.
DAZZ...
ONE FOR MY CONSCIENCE, CANNONBALL. I'M REALLY SORRY.
MAKES TWO OF US, GIRL.
WE'LL MAKE OUR MOVE DURING THE GLADIATORS' NEXT MATCH. HERE'S THE PLAN...

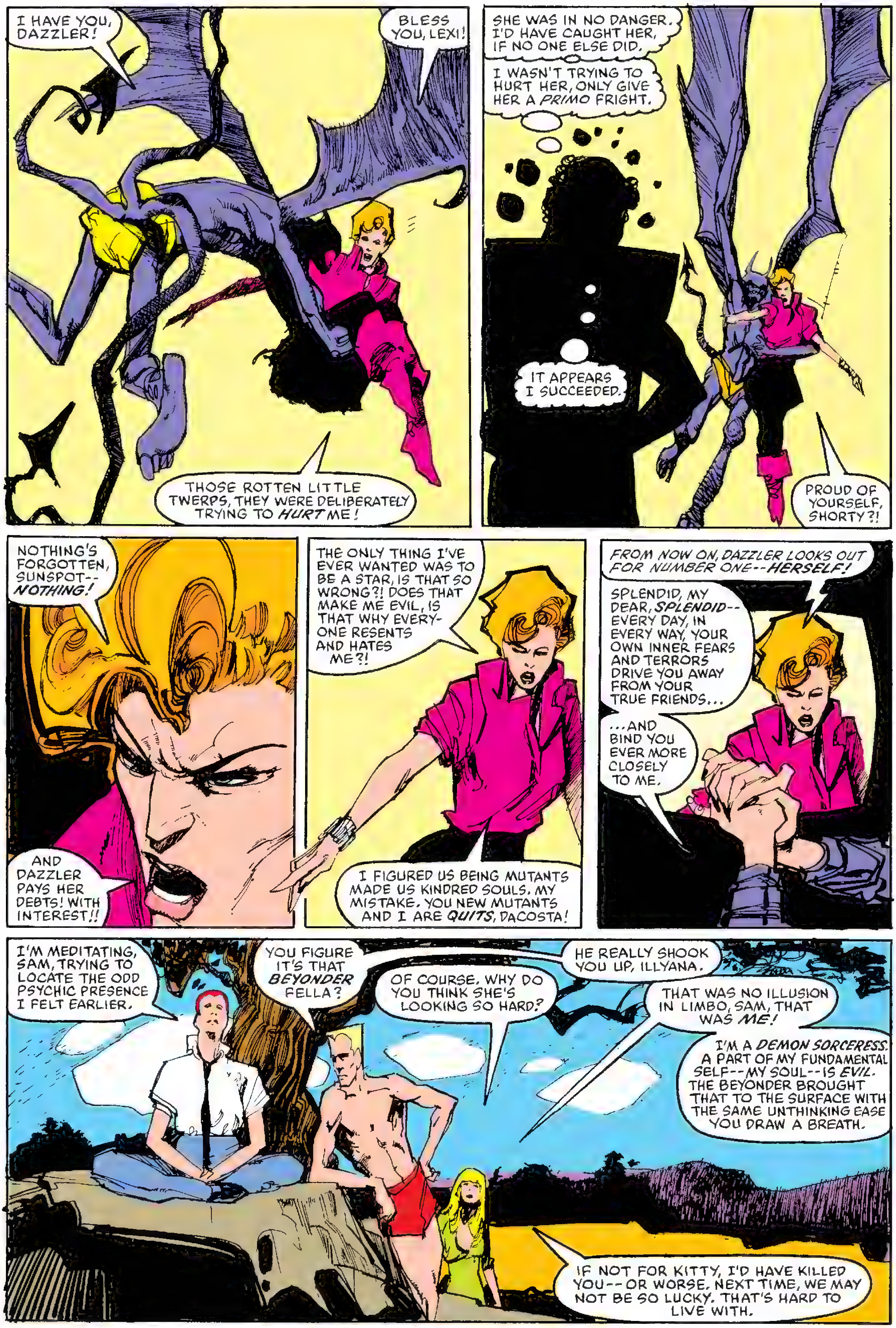

THE NEXT MORNING-- A PRACTICE SESSION IN THE GLADIATORS' EQUIVALENT OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S **DANGER ROOM**, WHEREIN THEIR VARIOUS SKILLS AND MUTANT POWERS ARE HONED TO A RAZOR-KEEN EDGE...
EVERYTHING'S GONE WRONG-- EACH TIME I TRY TO TALK TO BOBBY, HE INSULTS ME OR WALKS AWAY. HE WON'T LISTEN AND HE WON'T TRUST ME.
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? HOW CAN I HELP IF THEY WON'T LET ME? IT ISN'T FAIR--CHOOSING TO SING COST ME MY FATHER'S LOVE, THE SAME WAY JOINING THE GLADIATORS HAS COST THE MUTANTS' FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT.
WHY SHOULD I EVEN CARE ANYMORE? I DID MY BEST-- IF THEY'RE TOO STUBBORN AND STUPID TO ACCEPT...

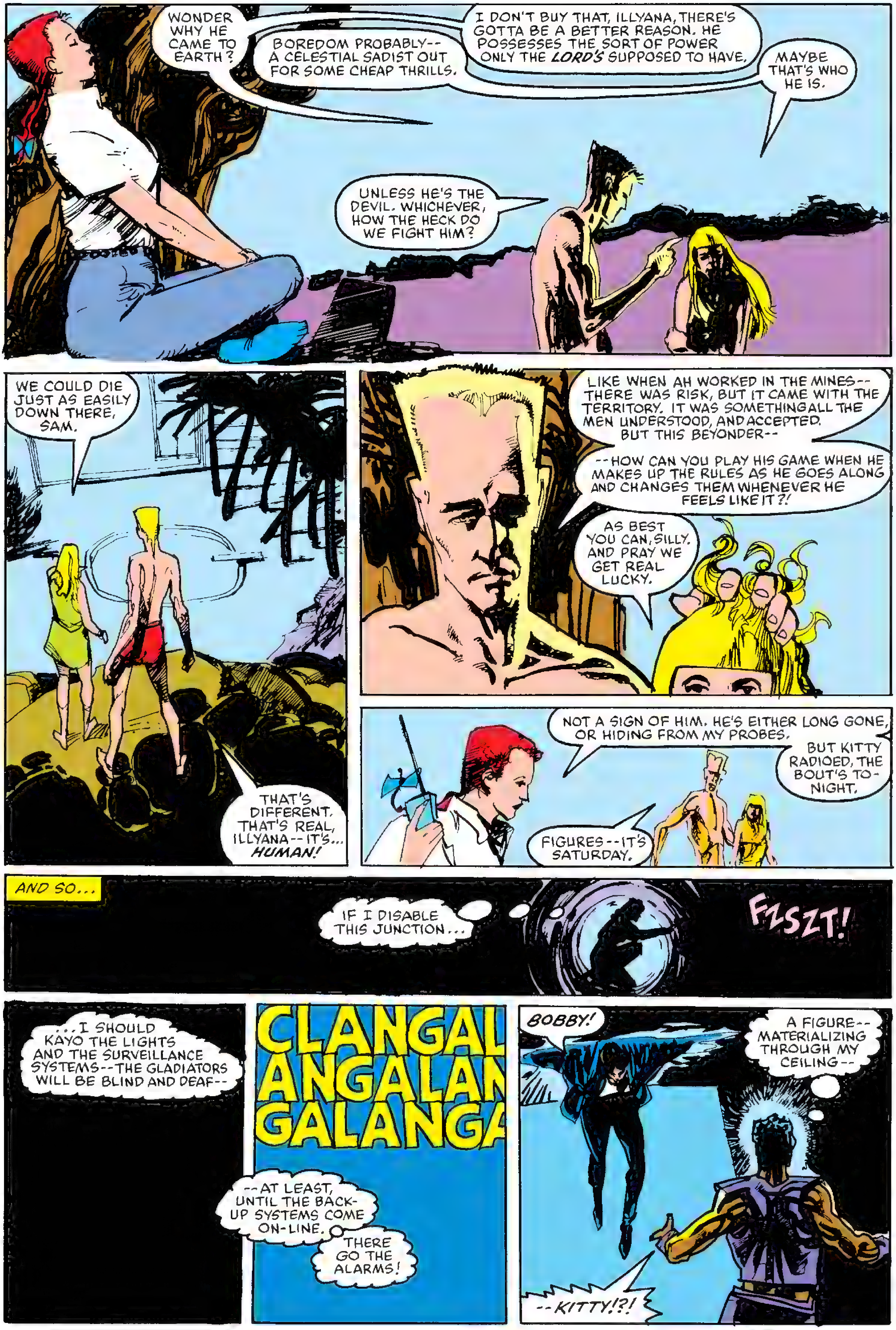

PAY ATTENTION, GOLDENHAIR! IF YOU'RE AS CARELESS IN THE ARENA...
...YOU'RE SURE TO FIND YOURSELF BADLY SINGED!
*MAGMA*--
--HURLING A *LAVA BOLT!!*

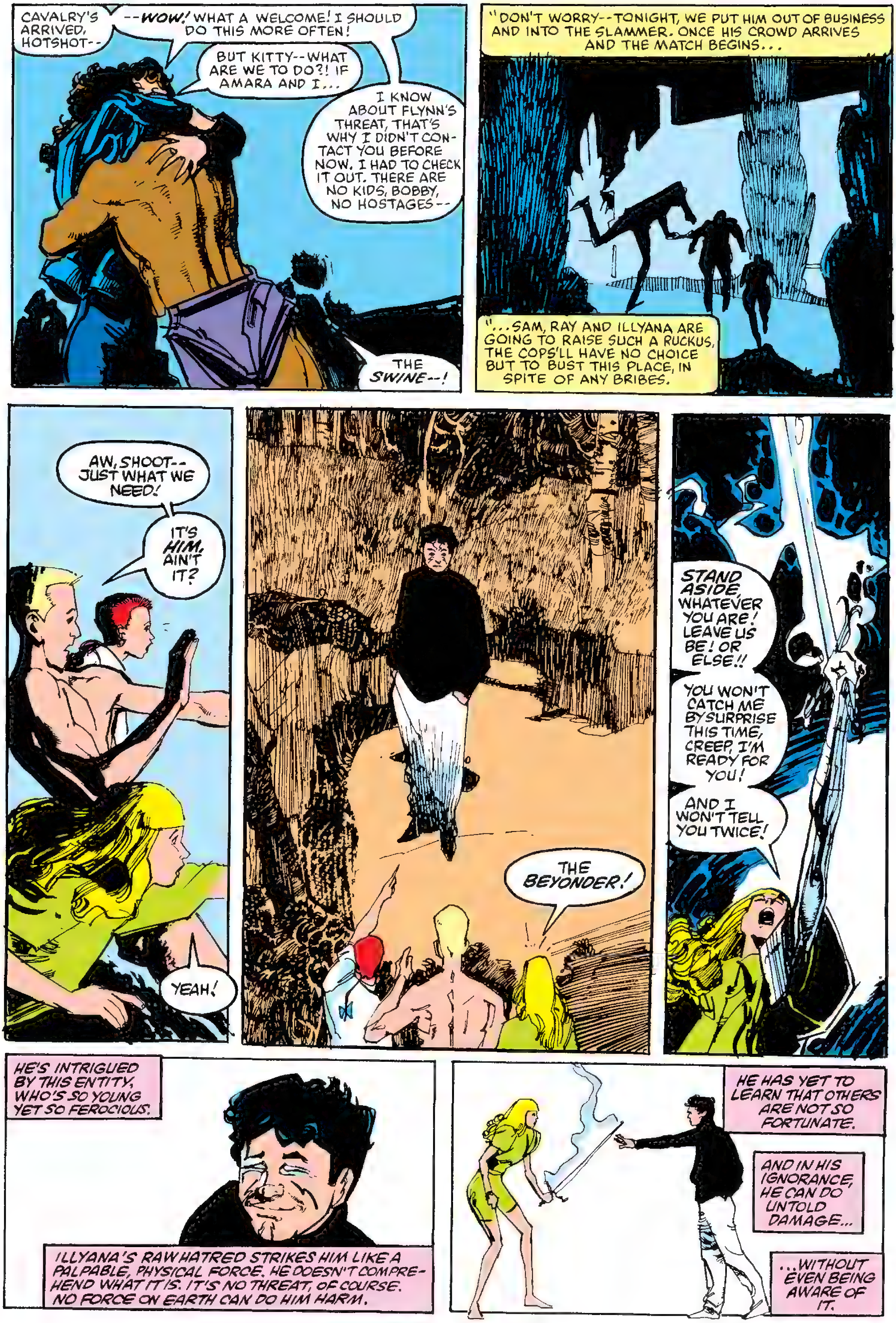

I DUCKED--IT MISSED ME--BARELY! I COULD HAVE BEEN BADLY BURNED!!
SUCH A PITY, *MENINA*...

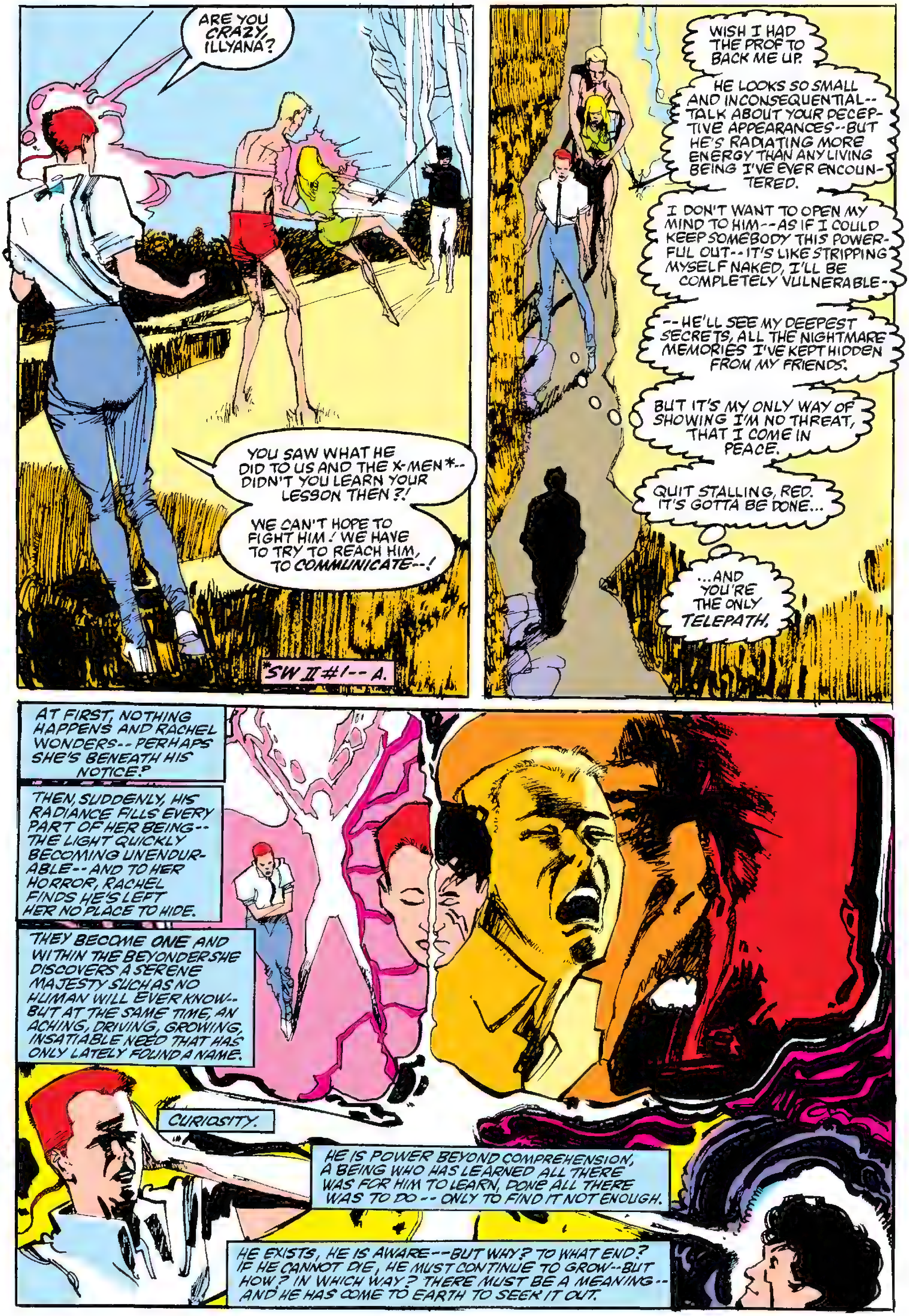

...YOU'VE LEAPT FROM THE FIRE...

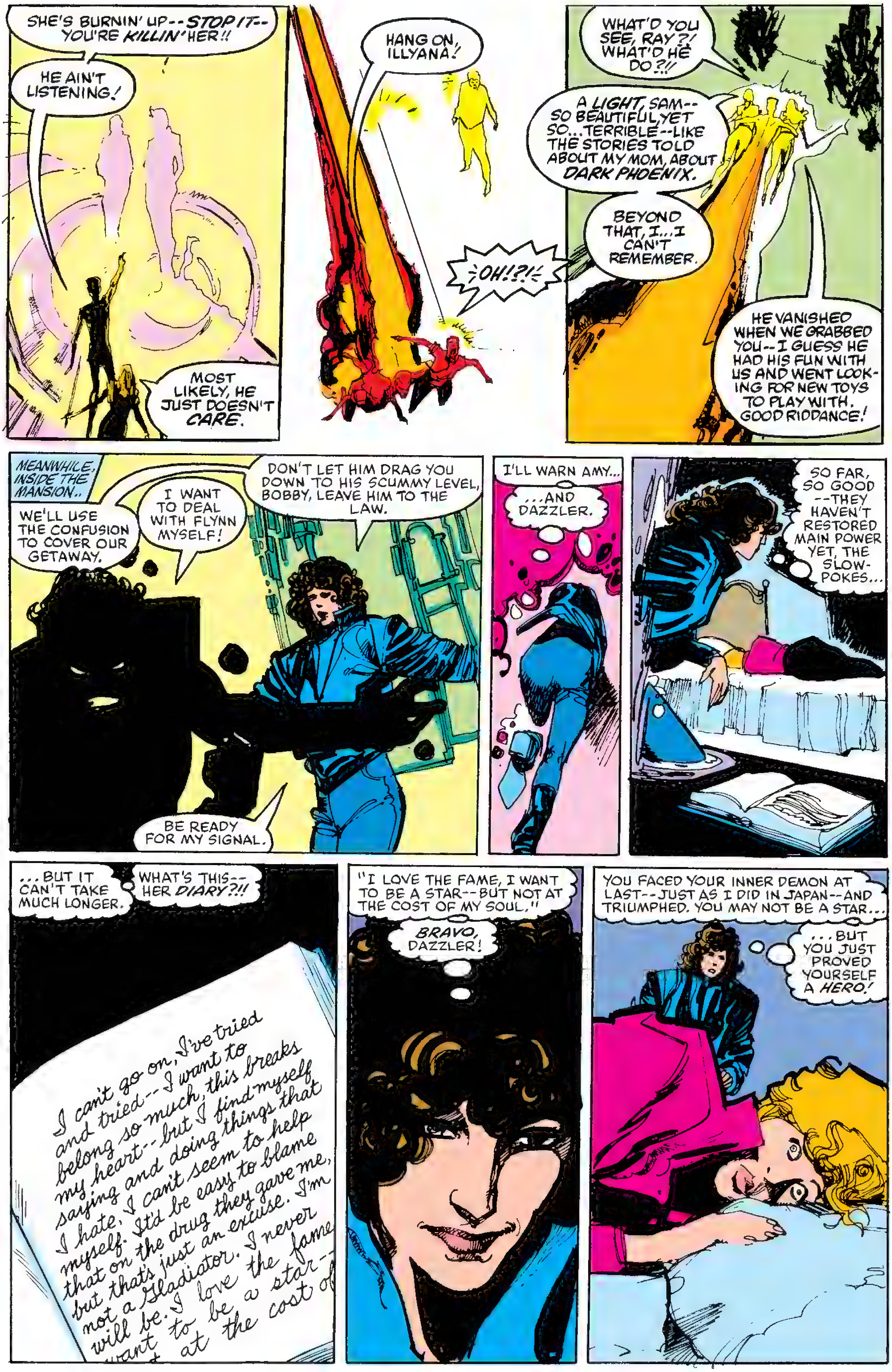

...TO THE PROVERBIAL *FRYING PAN!*
HAPPY LANDING!
ROBER*TOOOO!?!*

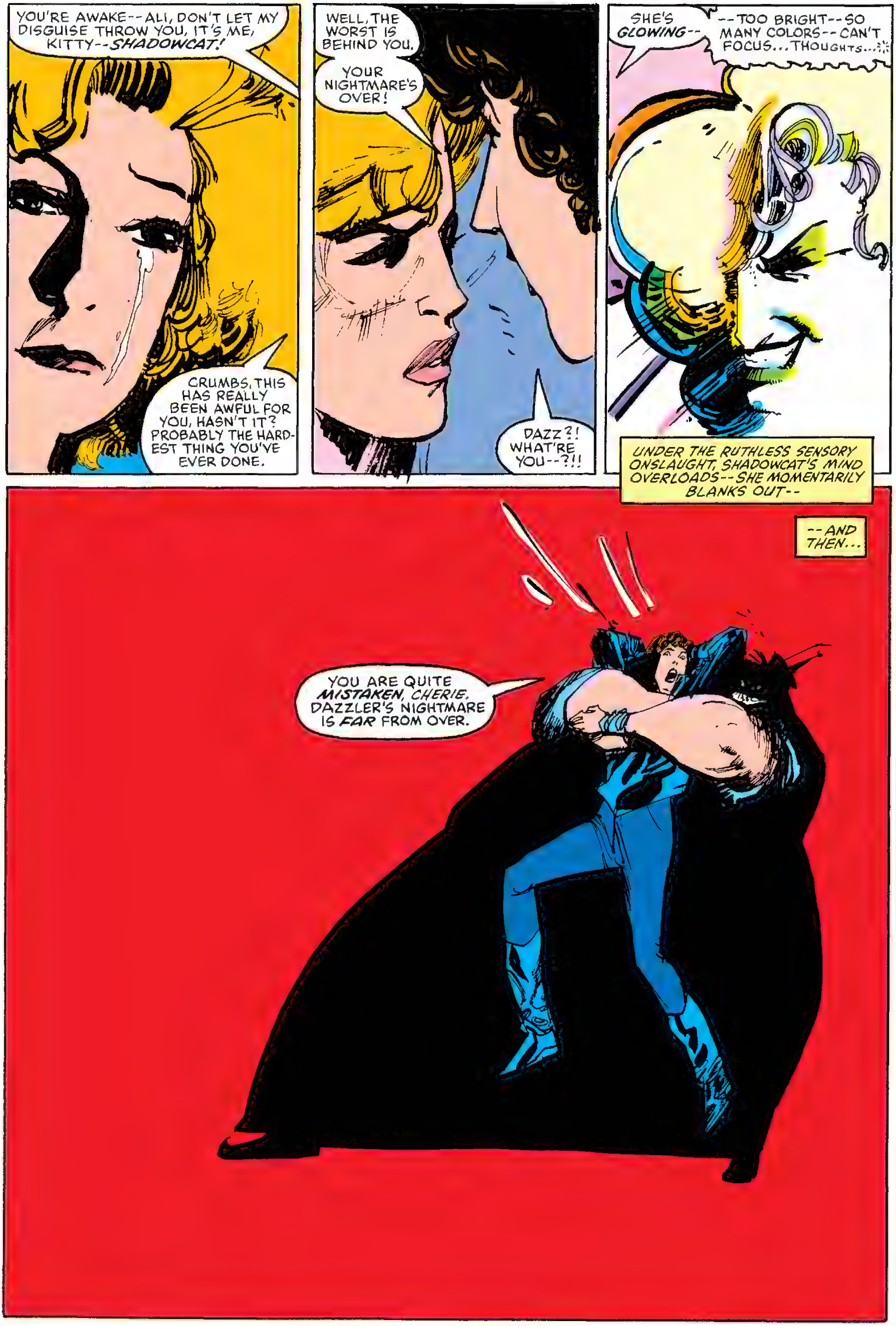

I HAVE YOU, DAZZLER!
BLESS YOU, LEXI!
THOSE ROTTEN LITTLE TWERPS, THEY WERE DELIBERATELY TRYING TO *HURT* ME!
SHE WAS IN NO DANGER. I'D HAVE CAUGHT HER, IF NO ONE ELSE DID.
I WASN'T TRYING TO HURT HER, ONLY GIVE HER A *PRIMO* FRIGHT.
IT APPEARS I SUCCEEDED.
PROUD OF YOURSELF, SHORTY?!
NOTHING'S FORGOTTEN, SUNSPOT-- *NOTHING!*
AND DAZZLER PAYS HER DEBTS! WITH INTEREST!!
THE ONLY THING I'VE EVER WANTED WAS TO BE A STAR, IS THAT SO WRONG?! DOES THAT MAKE ME EVIL, IS THAT WHY EVERYONE RESENTS AND HATES ME?!
I FIGURED US BEING MUTANTS MADE US KINDRED SOULS. MY MISTAKE. YOU NEW MUTANTS AND I ARE *QUITS*, DACOSTA!
*FROM NOW ON, DAZZLER LOOKS OUT FOR NUMBER ONE--HERSELF!*
SPLENDID, MY DEAR, *SPLENDID*-- EVERY DAY, IN EVERY WAY, YOUR OWN INNER FEARS AND TERRORS DRIVE YOU AWAY FROM YOUR TRUE FRIENDS...
...AND BIND YOU EVER MORE CLOSELY TO ME.
I'M MEDITATING, SAM, TRYING TO LOCATE THE ODD PSYCHIC PRESENCE I FELT EARLIER.
YOU FIGURE IT'S THAT *BEYONDER* FELLA?
OF COURSE. WHY DO YOU THINK SHE'S LOOKING SO HARD?
HE REALLY SHOOK YOU UP, ILLYANA.
THAT WAS NO ILLUSION IN LIMBO, SAM, THAT WAS *ME!*
I'M A *DEMON SORCERESS.* A PART OF MY FUNDAMENTAL SELF--MY SOUL--IS *EVIL.* THE BEYONDER BROUGHT THAT TO THE SURFACE WITH THE SAME UNTHINKING EASE YOU DRAW A BREATH.
IF NOT FOR KITTY, I'D HAVE KILLED YOU--OR WORSE. NEXT TIME, WE MAY NOT BE SO LUCKY. THAT'S HARD TO LIVE WITH.

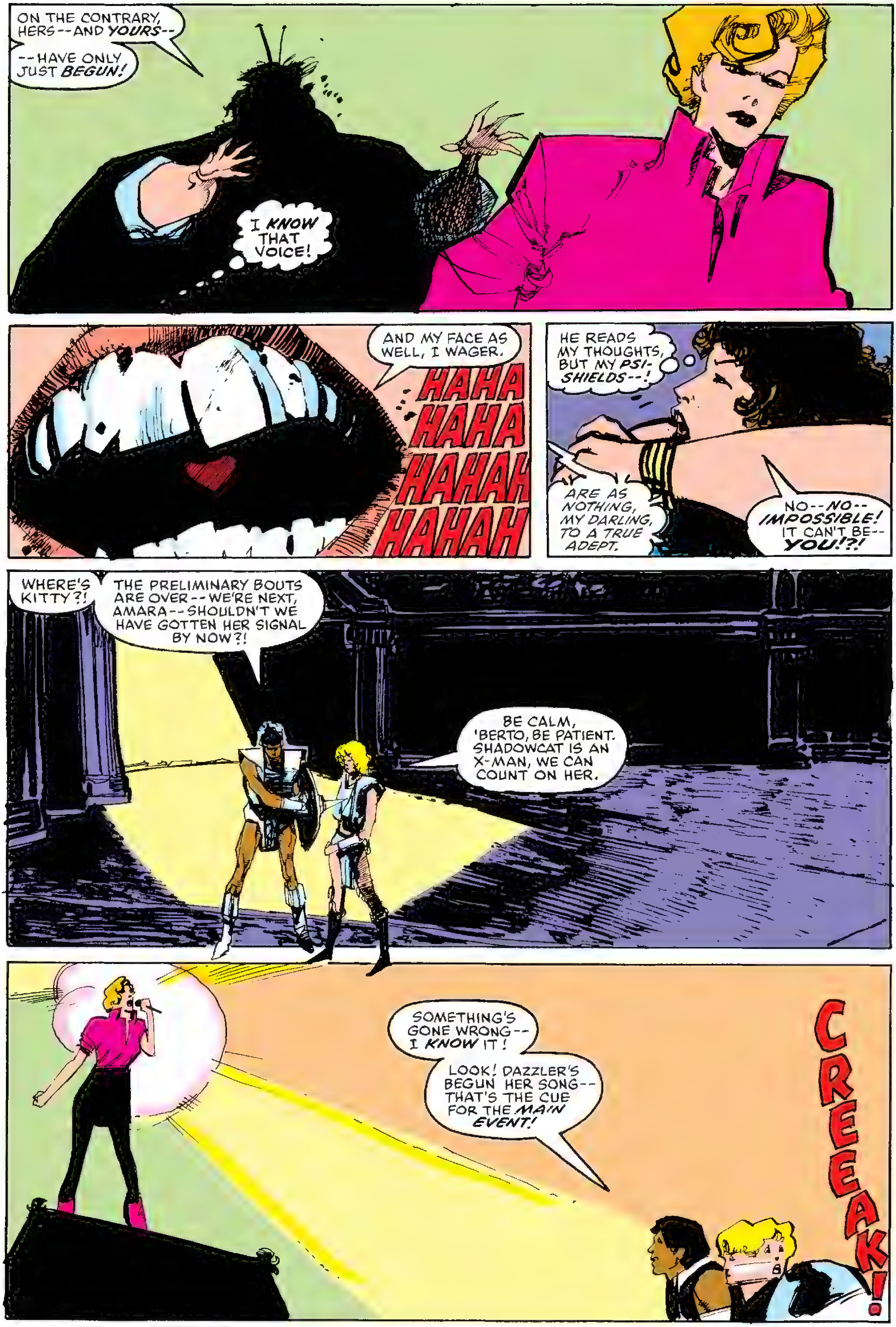

WONDER WHY HE CAME TO EARTH?
BOREDOM PROBABLY-- A CELESTIAL SADIST OUT FOR SOME CHEAP THRILLS.
I DON'T BUY THAT, ILLYANA, THERE'S GOTTA BE A BETTER REASON. HE POSSESSES THE SORT OF POWER ONLY THE *LORD'S* SUPPOSED TO HAVE.
MAYBE THAT'S WHO HE IS.
UNLESS HE'S THE DEVIL. WHICHEVER, HOW THE HECK DO WE FIGHT HIM?
WE COULD DIE JUST AS EASILY DOWN THERE, SAM.
THAT'S DIFFERENT. THAT'S REAL, ILLYANA--IT'S... *HUMAN!*
LIKE WHEN AH WORKED IN THE MINES-- THERE WAS RISK, BUT IT CAME WITH THE TERRITORY. IT WAS SOMETHING ALL THE MEN UNDERSTOOD, AND ACCEPTED. BUT THIS BEYONDER--
--HOW CAN YOU PLAY HIS GAME WHEN HE MAKES UP THE RULES AS HE GOES ALONG AND CHANGES THEM WHENEVER HE FEELS LIKE IT?!
AS BEST YOU CAN, SILLY. AND PRAY WE GET REAL LUCKY.
NOT A SIGN OF HIM. HE'S EITHER LONG GONE, OR HIDING FROM MY PROBES.
BUT KITTY RADIOED, THE BOUT'S TO-NIGHT.
FIGURES--IT'S SATURDAY.
AND SO...
IF I DISABLE THIS JUNCTION...
FZSZT!
...I SHOULD KAYO THE LIGHTS AND THE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS--THE GLADIATORS WILL BE BLIND AND DEAF--
CLANGALANGALANGALANGALANGA
--AT LEAST, UNTIL THE BACK-UP SYSTEMS COME ON-LINE.
THERE GO THE ALARMS!
BOBBY!
A FIGURE-- MATERIALIZING THROUGH MY CEILING--
--KITTY!?!

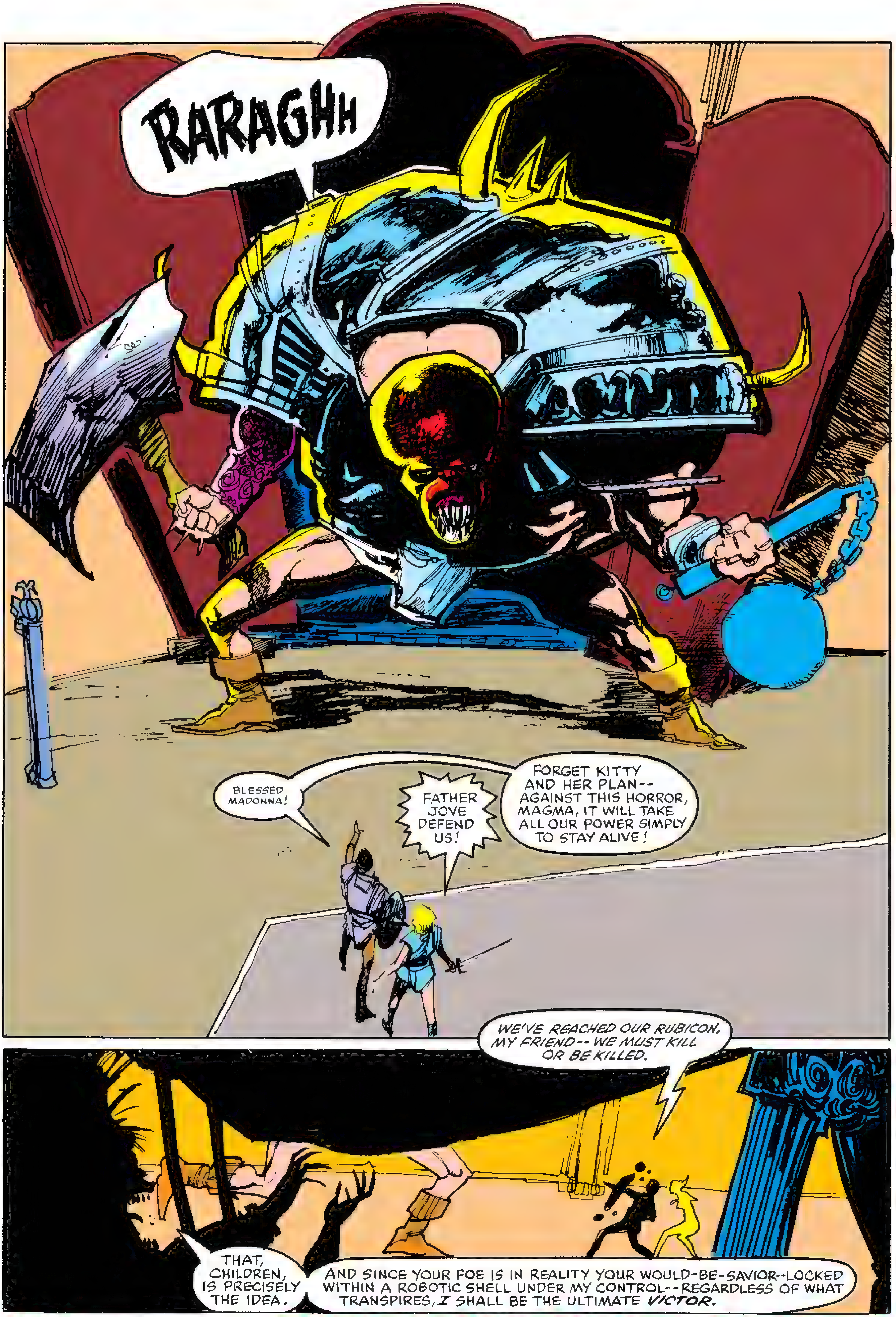

CAVALRY'S ARRIVED, HOTSHOT--
--*WOW!* WHAT A WELCOME! I SHOULD DO THIS MORE OFTEN!
BUT KITTY--WHAT ARE WE TO DO?! IF AMARA AND I...
I KNOW ABOUT FLYNN'S THREAT, THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T CONTACT YOU BEFORE NOW. I HAD TO CHECK IT OUT. THERE ARE NO KIDS, BOBBY, NO HOSTAGES--
THE *SWINE*--!
"DON'T WORRY--TONIGHT, WE PUT HIM OUT OF BUSINESS AND INTO THE SLAMMER. ONCE HIS CROWD ARRIVES AND THE MATCH BEGINS...
"...SAM, RAY AND ILLYANA ARE GOING TO RAISE SUCH A RUCKUS, THE COPS'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BUST THIS PLACE, IN SPITE OF ANY BRIBES.
AW, SHOOT--JUST WHAT WE NEED!
IT'S *HIM*, AIN'T IT?
YEAH!
THE *BEYONDER!*
*STAND ASIDE*, WHATEVER YOU ARE! LEAVE US BE! OR ELSE!!
YOU WON'T CATCH ME BY SURPRISE THIS TIME, CREEP, I'M READY FOR YOU!
AND I WON'T TELL YOU TWICE!
HE'S INTRIGUED BY THIS ENTITY, WHO'S SO YOUNG YET SO FEROCIOUS.
ILLYANA'S RAW HATRED STRIKES HIM LIKE A PALPABLE, PHYSICAL FORCE. HE DOESN'T COMPREHEND WHAT IT IS. IT'S NO THREAT, OF COURSE. NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN DO HIM HARM.
HE HAS YET TO LEARN THAT OTHERS ARE NOT SO FORTUNATE.
AND IN HIS IGNORANCE, HE CAN DO UNTOLD DAMAGE...
...WITHOUT EVEN BEING AWARE OF IT.


ARE YOU CRAZY, ILLYANA?
YOU SAW WHAT HE DID TO US AND THE X-MEN*-- DIDN'T YOU LEARN YOUR LESSON THEN?!
WE CAN'T HOPE TO FIGHT HIM! WE HAVE TO TRY TO REACH HIM, TO COMMUNICATE--!
*SW II #1-- A.
WISH I HAD THE PROF TO BACK ME UP.
HE LOOKS SO SMALL AND INCONSEQUENTIAL-- TALK ABOUT YOUR DECEPTIVE APPEARANCES--BUT HE'S RADIATING MORE ENERGY THAN ANY LIVING BEING I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
I DON'T WANT TO OPEN MY MIND TO HIM--AS IF I COULD KEEP SOMEBODY THIS POWERFUL OUT--IT'S LIKE STRIPPING MYSELF NAKED, I'LL BE COMPLETELY VULNERABLE--
--HE'LL SEE MY DEEPEST SECRETS, ALL THE NIGHTMARE MEMORIES I'VE KEPT HIDDEN FROM MY FRIENDS.
BUT IT'S MY ONLY WAY OF SHOWING I'M NO THREAT, THAT I COME IN PEACE.
QUIT STALLING, RED. IT'S GOTTA BE DONE...
...AND YOU'RE THE ONLY TELEPATH.
AT FIRST, NOTHING HAPPENS AND RACHEL WONDERS--PERHAPS SHE'S BENEATH HIS NOTICE?
THEN, SUDDENLY, HIS RADIANCE FILLS EVERY PART OF HER BEING--THE LIGHT QUICKLY BECOMING UNENDURABLE--AND TO HER HORROR, RACHEL FINDS HE'S LEFT HER NO PLACE TO HIDE.
THEY BECOME ONE AND WITHIN THE BEYONDER SHE DISCOVERS A SERENE MAJESTY SUCH AS NO HUMAN WILL EVER KNOW-- BUT AT THE SAME TIME, AN ACHING, DRIVING, GROWING, INSATIABLE NEED THAT HAS ONLY LATELY FOUND A NAME.
CURIOSITY.
HE IS POWER BEYOND COMPREHENSION, A BEING WHO HAS LEARNED ALL THERE WAS FOR HIM TO LEARN, DONE ALL THERE WAS TO DO -- ONLY TO FIND IT NOT ENOUGH.
HE EXISTS, HE IS AWARE--BUT WHY? TO WHAT END? IF HE CANNOT DIE, HE MUST CONTINUE TO GROW--BUT HOW? IN WHICH WAY? THERE MUST BE A MEANING-- AND HE HAS COME TO EARTH TO SEEK IT OUT.


SHE'S BURNIN' UP--STOP IT--YOU'RE KILLIN' HER!!
HE AIN'T LISTENING!
MOST LIKELY, HE JUST DOESN'T CARE.
HANG ON, ILLYANA!
OH!?!
WHAT'D YOU SEE, RAY?! WHAT'D HE DO?!!
A LIGHT, SAM--SO BEAUTIFUL, YET SO...TERRIBLE--LIKE THE STORIES TOLD ABOUT MY MOM, ABOUT DARK PHOENIX.
BEYOND THAT, I...I CAN'T REMEMBER.
HE VANISHED WHEN WE GRABBED YOU--I GUESS HE HAD HIS FUN WITH US AND WENT LOOKING FOR NEW TOYS TO PLAY WITH. GOOD RIDDANCE!
MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE MANSION..
WE'LL USE THE CONFUSION TO COVER OUR GETAWAY.
I WANT TO DEAL WITH FLYNN MYSELF!
DON'T LET HIM DRAG YOU DOWN TO HIS SCUMMY LEVEL, BOBBY. LEAVE HIM TO THE LAW.
BE READY FOR MY SIGNAL.
I'LL WARN AMY...
...AND DAZZLER.
SO FAR, SO GOOD--THEY HAVEN'T RESTORED MAIN POWER YET, THE SLOW-POKES...
...BUT IT CAN'T TAKE MUCH LONGER.
WHAT'S THIS--HER DIARY?!!
I can't go on, I've tried and tried--I want to belong so much, this breaks my heart--but I find myself saying and doing things that I hate. I can't seem to help myself. It'd be easy to blame that on the drug they gave me, but that's just an excuse. I'm not a Gladiator. I never will be. I love the fame want to be a star at the cost of
"I LOVE THE FAME, I WANT TO BE A STAR--BUT NOT AT THE COST OF MY SOUL."
BRAVO, DAZZLER!
YOU FACED YOUR INNER DEMON AT LAST--JUST AS I DID IN JAPAN--AND TRIUMPHED. YOU MAY NOT BE A STAR...
...BUT YOU JUST PROVED YOURSELF A HERO!


YOU'RE AWAKE--ALI, DON'T LET MY DISGUISE THROW YOU, IT'S ME, KITTY--*SHADOWCAT!*
CRUMBS, THIS HAS REALLY BEEN AWFUL FOR YOU, HASN'T IT? PROBABLY THE HARDEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE.
WELL, THE WORST IS BEHIND YOU.
YOUR NIGHTMARE'S OVER!
DAZZ?! WHAT'RE YOU--?!!
SHE'S *GLOWING*--
--TOO BRIGHT--SO MANY COLORS--CAN'T FOCUS... THOUGHTS...
*UNDER THE RUTHLESS SENSORY ONSLAUGHT, SHADOWCAT'S MIND OVERLOADS--SHE MOMENTARILY BLANKS OUT--*
*--AND THEN...*
YOU ARE QUITE ***MISTAKEN, CHERIE.*** DAZZLER'S NIGHTMARE IS ***FAR*** FROM OVER.


ON THE CONTRARY, HERS--AND *YOURS*--
--HAVE ONLY JUST *BEGUN!*
I *KNOW* THAT VOICE!
AND MY FACE AS WELL, I WAGER.
HAHA HAHA HAHAH HAHAH
HE READS MY THOUGHTS, BUT MY *PSI-SHIELDS*--!
*ARE AS NOTHING, MY DARLING, TO A TRUE ADEPT.*
NO--*NO*--*IMPOSSIBLE!* IT CAN'T BE--*YOU!?!*
WHERE'S KITTY?!
THE PRELIMINARY BOUTS ARE OVER--WE'RE NEXT, AMARA--SHOULDN'T WE HAVE GOTTEN HER SIGNAL BY NOW?!
BE CALM, 'BERTO, BE PATIENT. SHADOWCAT IS AN X-MAN, WE CAN COUNT ON HER.
SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG--I *KNOW* IT!
LOOK! DAZZLER'S BEGUN HER SONG--THAT'S THE CUE FOR THE *MAIN EVENT!*
CREEAK!


RARAGHH
BLESSED MADONNA!
FATHER JOVE DEFEND US!
FORGET KITTY AND HER PLAN-- AGAINST THIS HORROR, MAGMA, IT WILL TAKE ALL OUR POWER SIMPLY TO STAY ALIVE!
WE'VE REACHED OUR RUBICON, MY FRIEND-- WE MUST KILL OR BE KILLED.
THAT, CHILDREN, IS PRECISELY THE IDEA.
AND SINCE YOUR FOE IS IN REALITY YOUR WOULD-BE-SAVIOR--LOCKED WITHIN A ROBOTIC SHELL UNDER MY CONTROL--REGARDLESS OF WHAT TRANSPIRES, I SHALL BE THE ULTIMATE VICTOR.

**NEXT:** *THE CONCLUSION--* **SATURDAY NIGHT FIGHT!**

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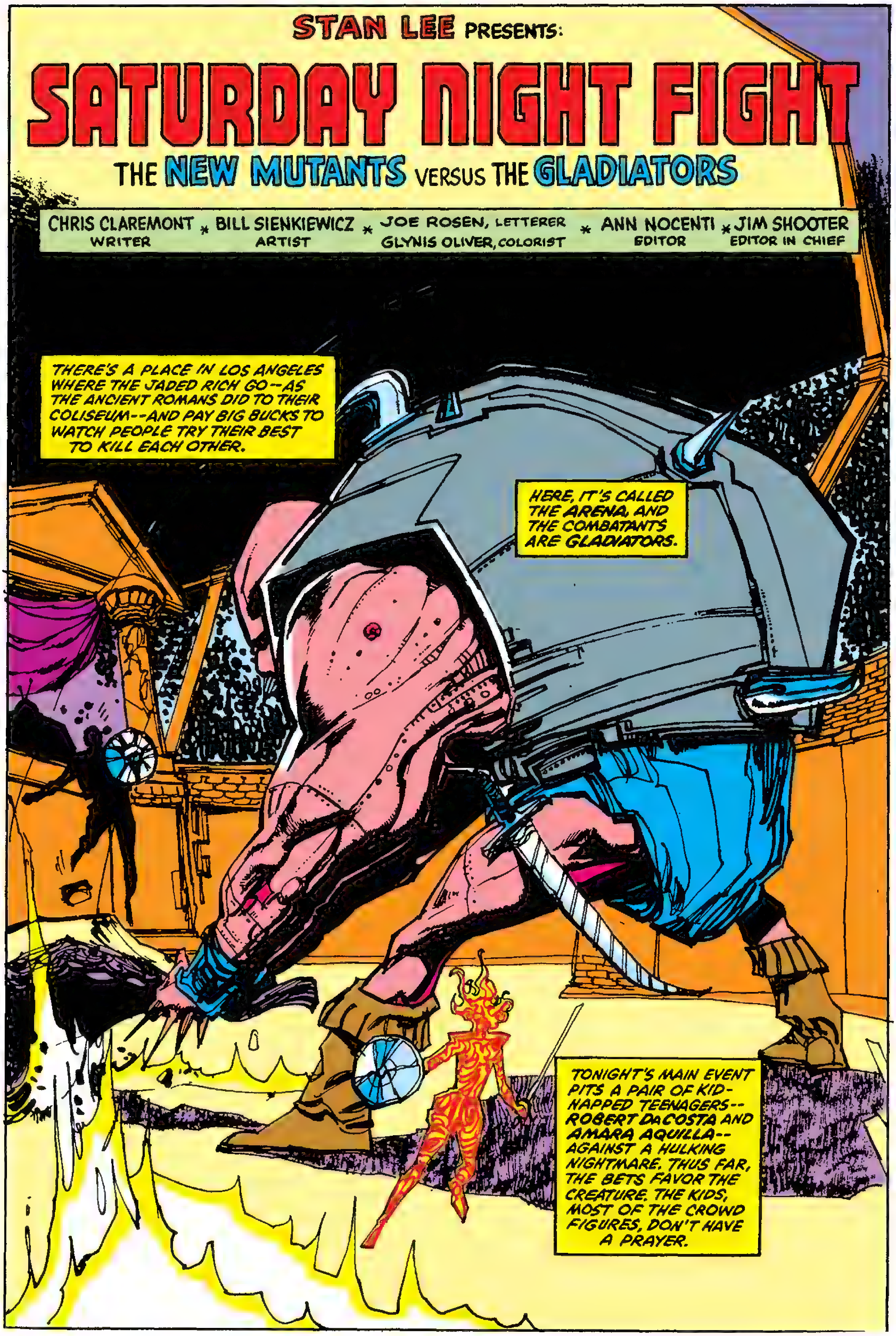
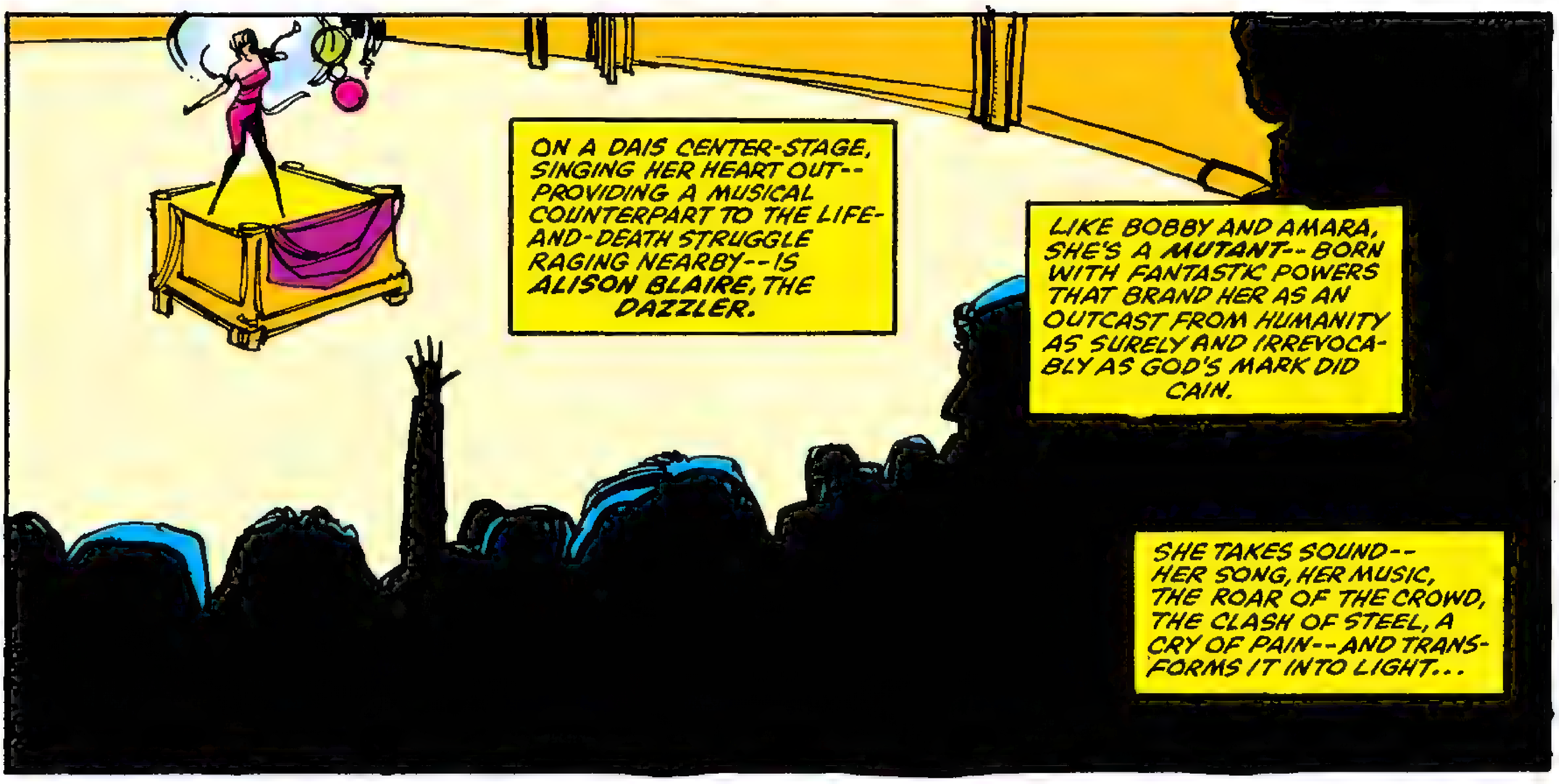
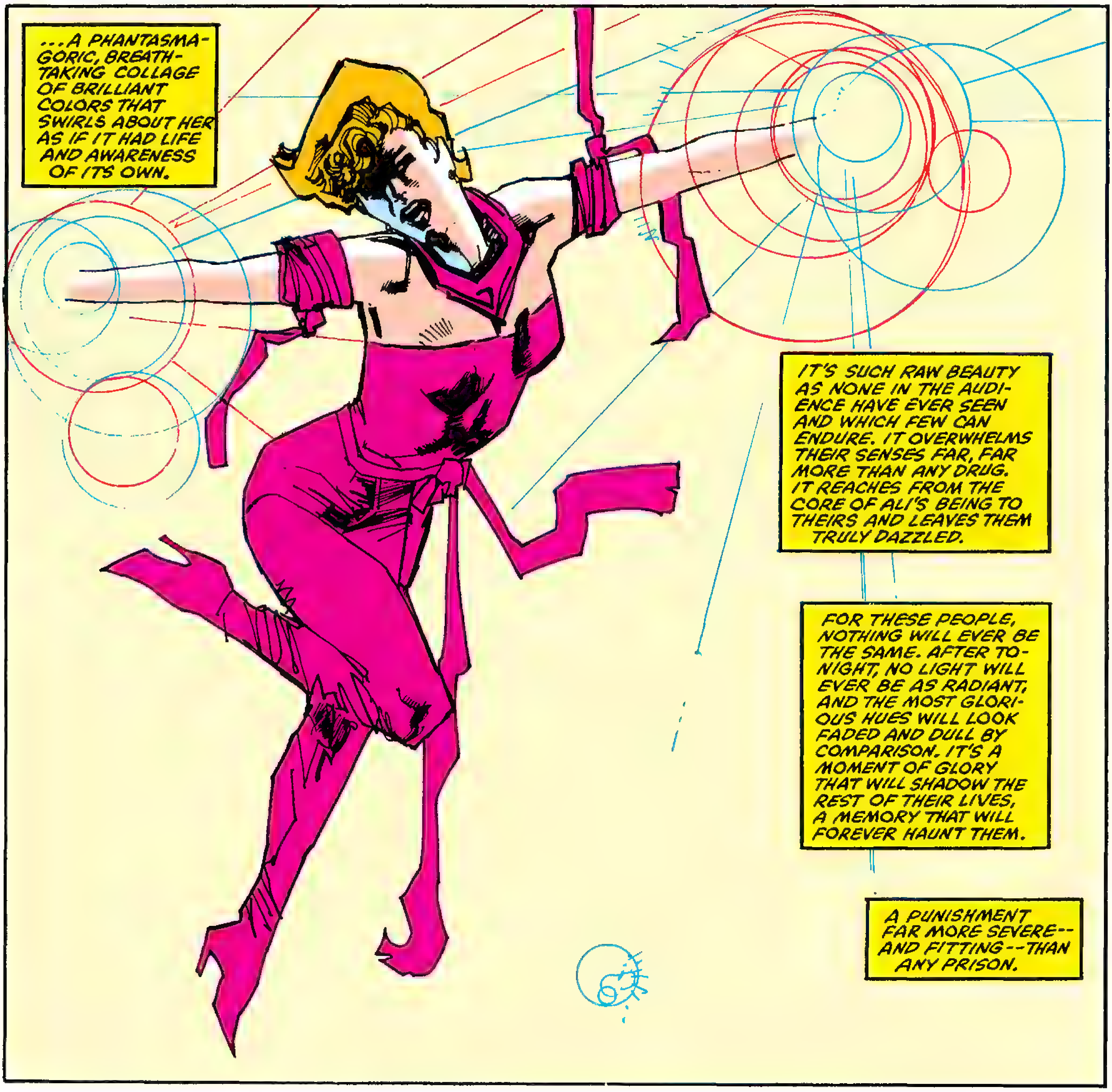
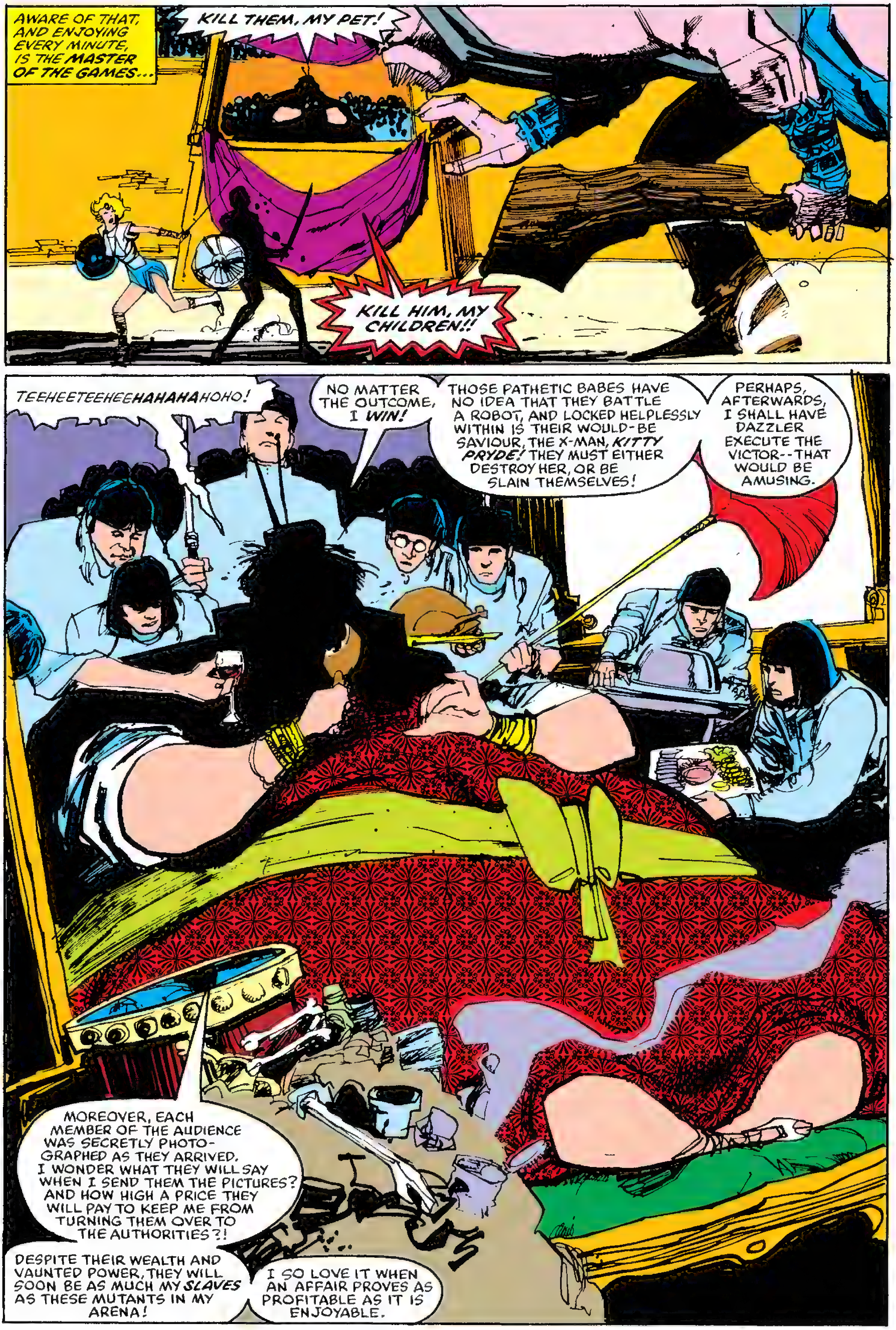
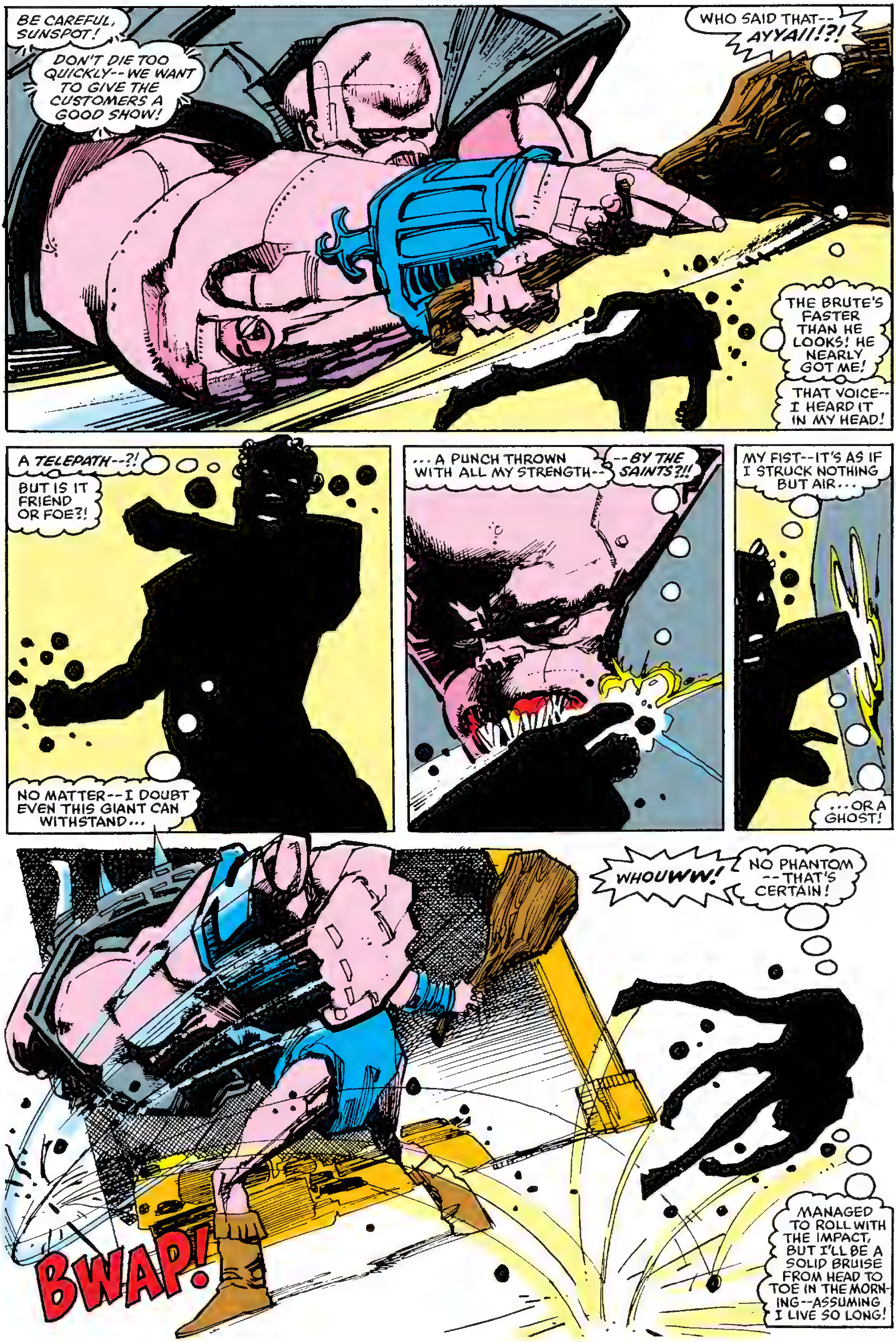
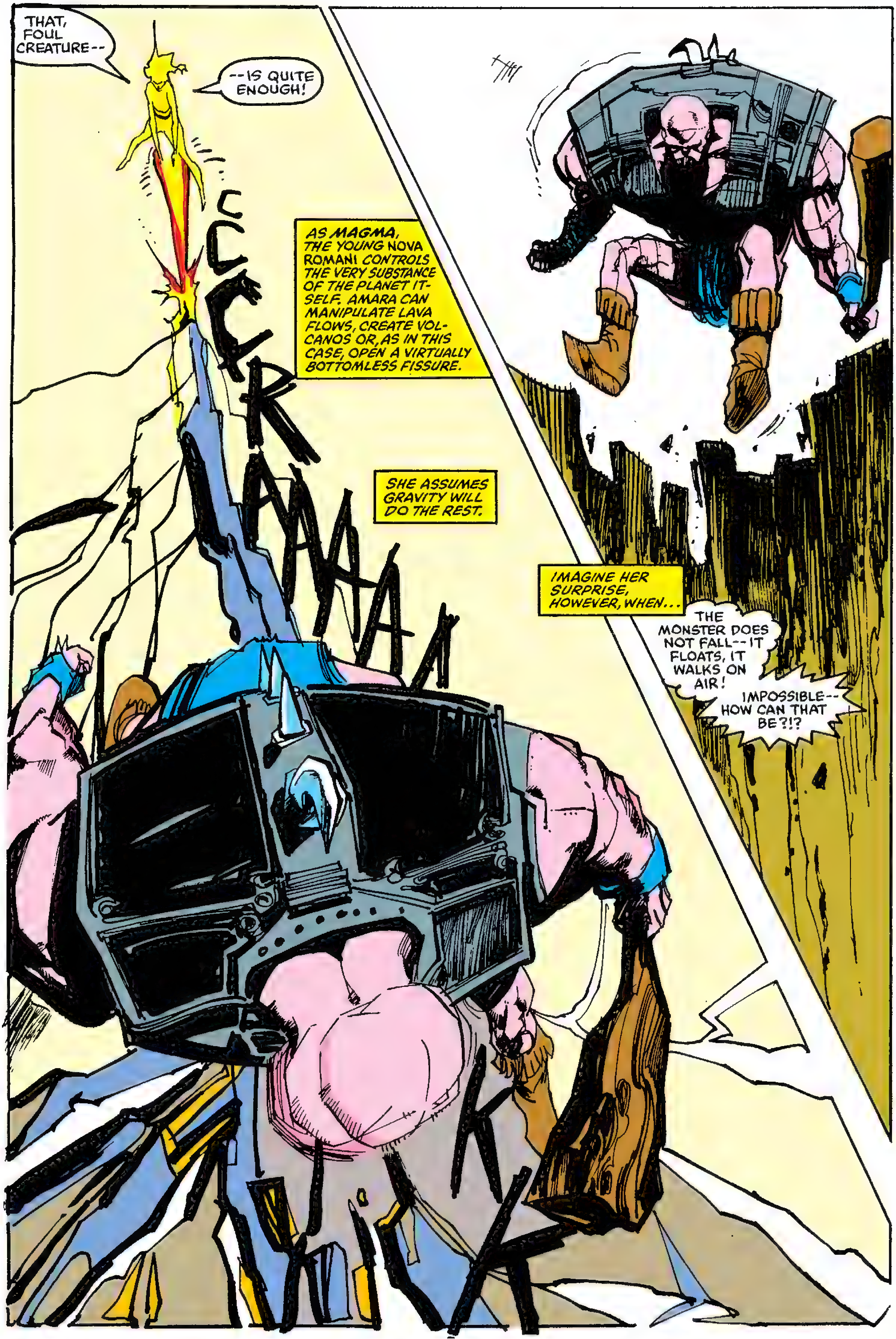

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
SATURDAY NIGHT FIGHT
THE NEW MUTANTS VERSUS THE GLADIATORS
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER * BILL SIENKIEWICZ ARTIST * JOE ROSEN, LETTERER GLYNIS OLIVER, COLORIST * ANN NOCENTI EDITOR * JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF
THERE'S A PLACE IN LOS ANGELES WHERE THE JADED RICH GO--AS THE ANCIENT ROMANS DID TO THEIR COLISEUM--AND PAY BIG BUCKS TO WATCH PEOPLE TRY THEIR BEST TO KILL EACH OTHER.
HERE, IT'S CALLED THE ARENA, AND THE COMBATANTS ARE GLADIATORS.
TONIGHT'S MAIN EVENT PITS A PAIR OF KIDNAPPED TEENAGERS--ROBERT DACOSTA AND AMARA AQUILLA--AGAINST A HULKING NIGHTMARE. THUS FAR, THE BETS FAVOR THE CREATURE. THE KIDS, MOST OF THE CROWD FIGURES, DON'T HAVE A PRAYER.

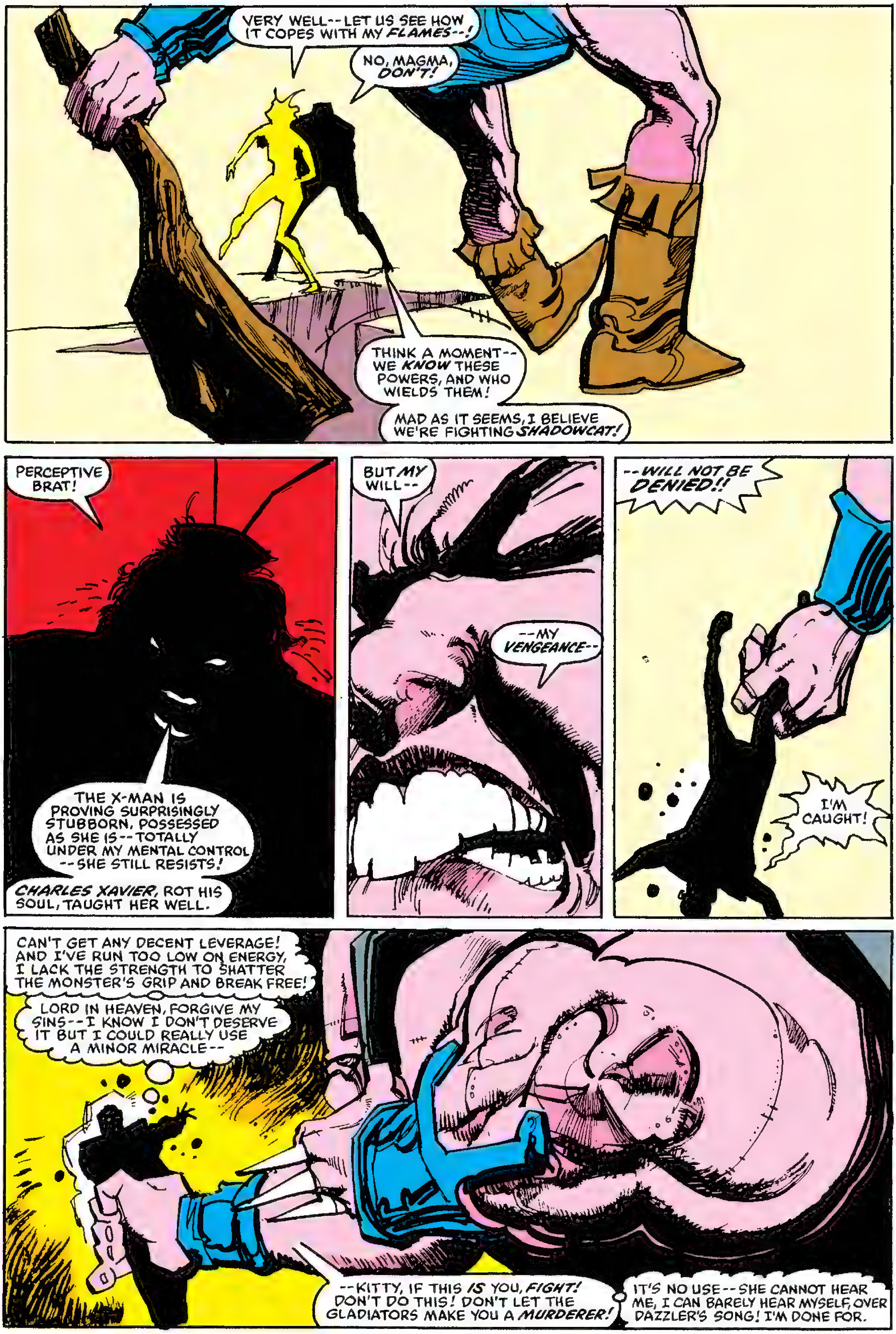

ON A DAIS CENTER-STAGE, SINGING HER HEART OUT-- PROVIDING A MUSICAL COUNTERPART TO THE LIFE-AND-DEATH STRUGGLE RAGING NEARBY--IS **ALISON BLAIRE**, THE **DAZZLER.**
LIKE BOBBY AND AMARA, SHE'S A **MUTANT**-- BORN WITH FANTASTIC POWERS THAT BRAND HER AS AN OUTCAST FROM HUMANITY AS SURELY AND IRREVOCABLY AS GOD'S MARK DID CAIN.
SHE TAKES SOUND-- HER SONG, HER MUSIC, THE ROAR OF THE CROWD, THE CLASH OF STEEL, A CRY OF PAIN--AND TRANSFORMS IT INTO LIGHT...

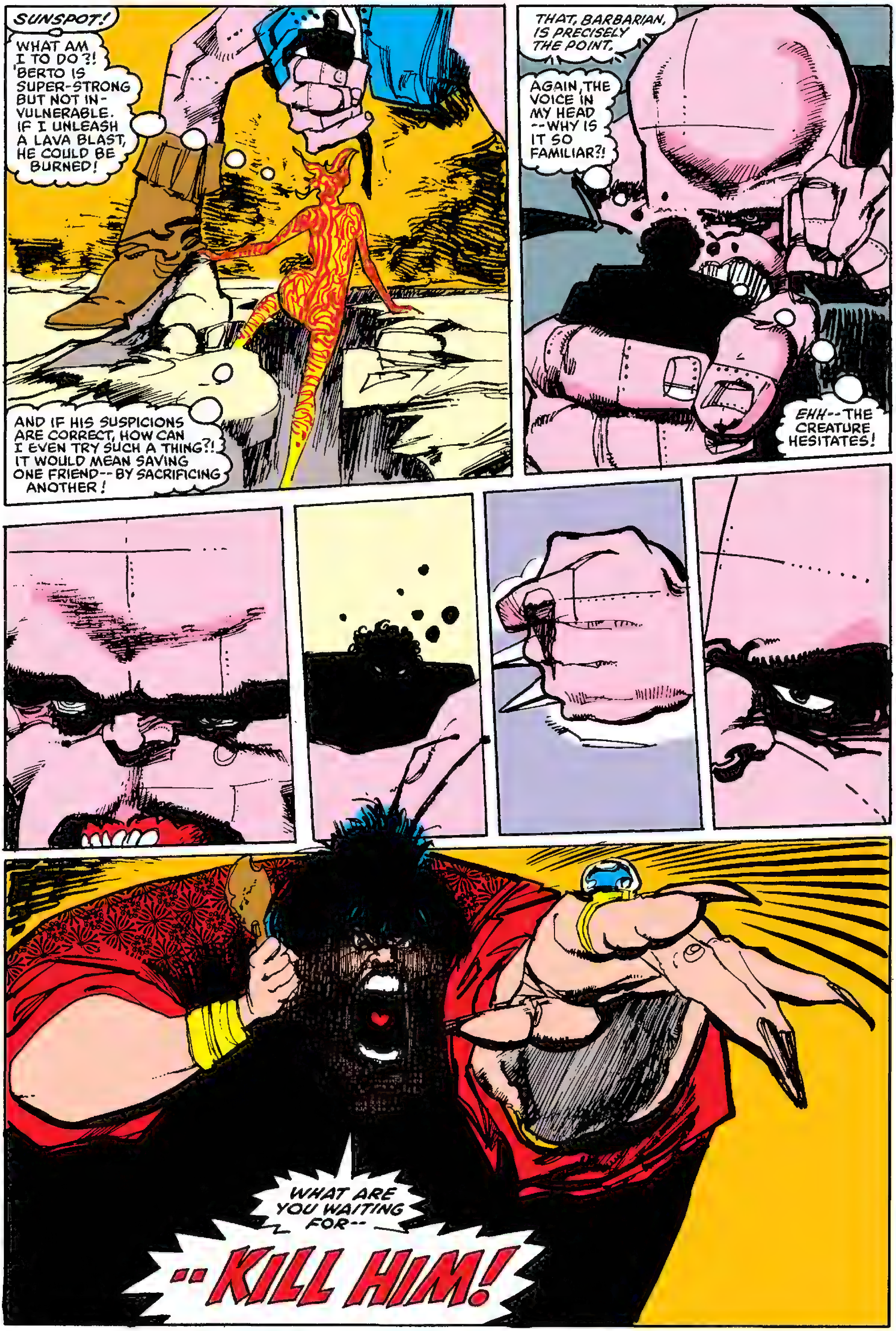

...A PHANTASMAGORIC, BREATHTAKING COLLAGE OF BRILLIANT COLORS THAT SWIRLS ABOUT HER AS IF IT HAD LIFE AND AWARENESS OF ITS OWN.
IT'S SUCH RAW BEAUTY AS NONE IN THE AUDIENCE HAVE EVER SEEN AND WHICH FEW CAN ENDURE. IT OVERWHELMS THEIR SENSES FAR, FAR MORE THAN ANY DRUG. IT REACHES FROM THE CORE OF ALI'S BEING TO THEIRS AND LEAVES THEM TRULY DAZZLED.
FOR THESE PEOPLE, NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME. AFTER TONIGHT, NO LIGHT WILL EVER BE AS RADIANT, AND THE MOST GLORIOUS HUES WILL LOOK FADED AND DULL BY COMPARISON. IT'S A MOMENT OF GLORY THAT WILL SHADOW THE REST OF THEIR LIVES, A MEMORY THAT WILL FOREVER HAUNT THEM.
A PUNISHMENT FAR MORE SEVERE-- AND FITTING--THAN ANY PRISON.

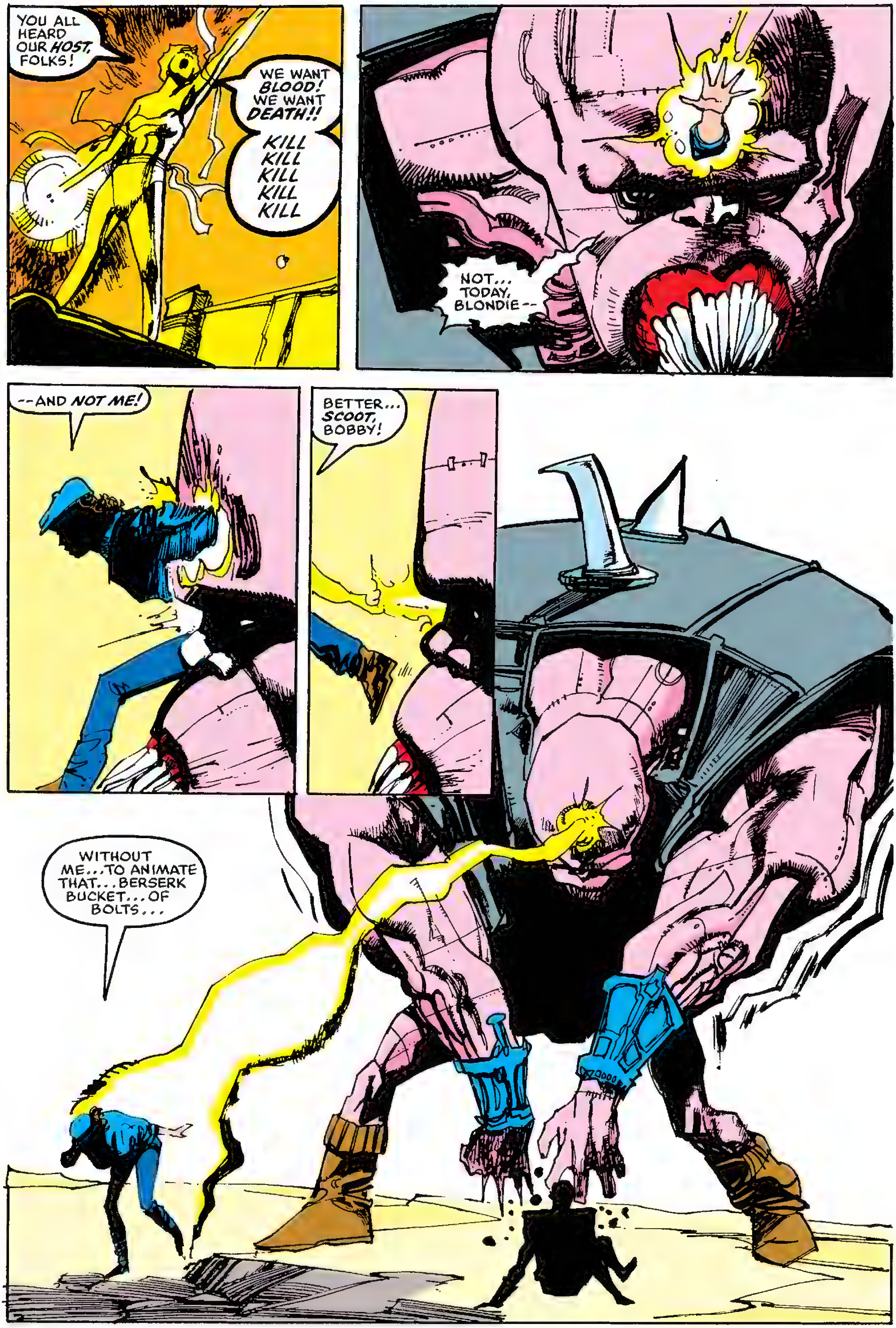

AWARE OF THAT, AND ENJOYING EVERY MINUTE, IS THE **MASTER OF THE GAMES**...
KILL THEM, MY PET!
KILL HIM, MY CHILDREN!!
TEEHEETEEHEE**HAHAHA**HOHO!
NO MATTER THE OUTCOME, I *WIN!*
THOSE PATHETIC BABES HAVE NO IDEA THAT THEY BATTLE A ROBOT, AND LOCKED HELPLESSLY WITHIN IS THEIR WOULD-BE SAVIOUR, THE X-MAN, *KITTY PRYDE!* THEY MUST EITHER DESTROY HER, OR BE SLAIN THEMSELVES!
PERHAPS, AFTERWARDS, I SHALL HAVE DAZZLER EXECUTE THE VICTOR--THAT WOULD BE AMUSING.
MOREOVER, EACH MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE WAS SECRETLY PHOTOGRAPHED AS THEY ARRIVED. I WONDER WHAT THEY WILL SAY WHEN I SEND THEM THE PICTURES? AND HOW HIGH A PRICE THEY WILL PAY TO KEEP ME FROM TURNING THEM OVER TO THE AUTHORITIES?!
DESPITE THEIR WEALTH AND VAUNTED POWER, THEY WILL SOON BE AS MUCH MY *SLAVES* AS THESE MUTANTS IN MY ARENA!
I SO LOVE IT WHEN AN AFFAIR PROVES AS PROFITABLE AS IT IS ENJOYABLE.

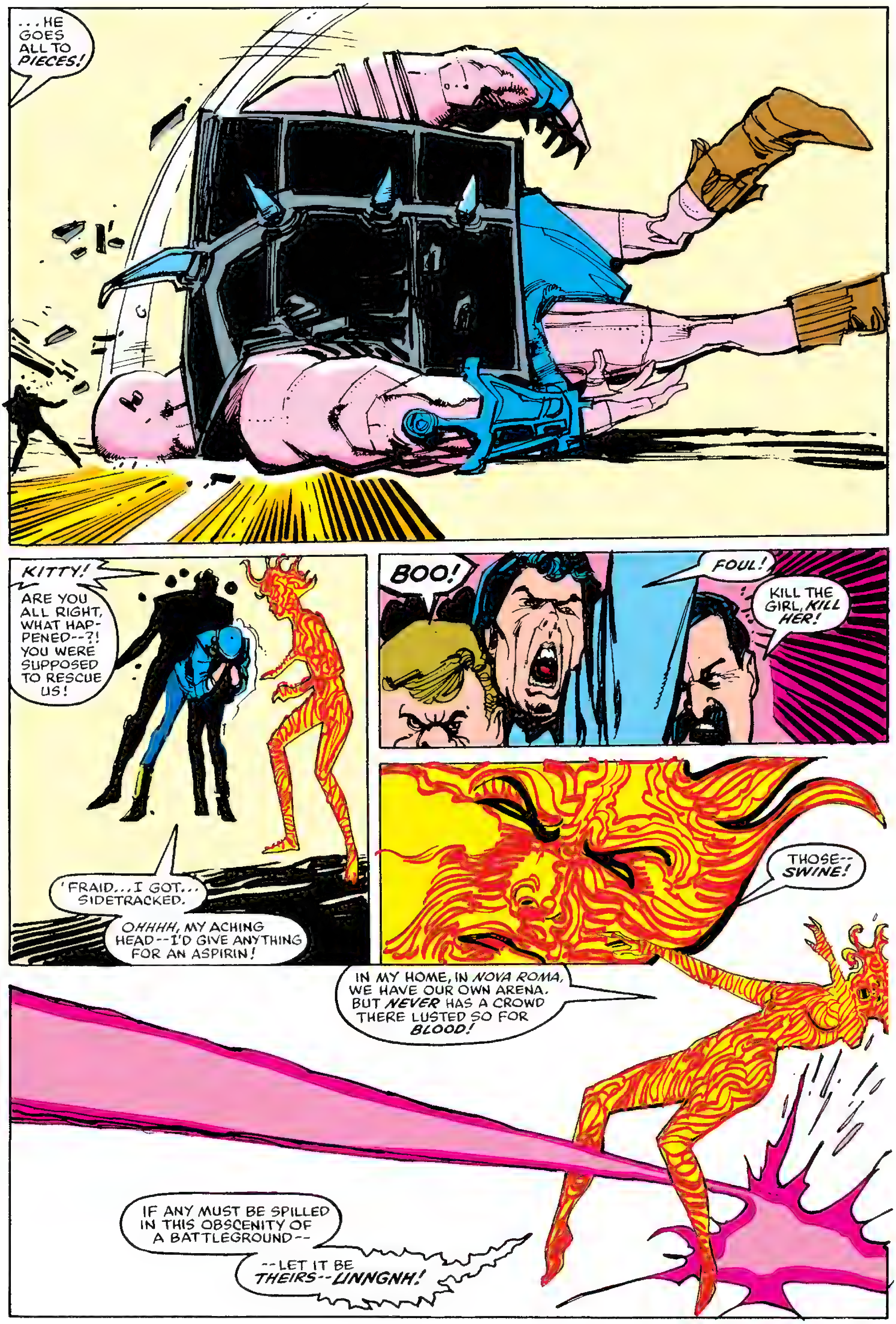

BE CAREFUL, SUNSPOT!
DON'T DIE TOO QUICKLY--WE WANT TO GIVE THE CUSTOMERS A GOOD SHOW!
WHO SAID THAT-- *AYYAII!?!*
THE BRUTE'S FASTER THAN HE LOOKS! HE NEARLY GOT ME!
THAT VOICE-- I HEARD IT IN MY HEAD!
A *TELEPATH*--?!
BUT IS IT FRIEND OR FOE?!
NO MATTER--I DOUBT EVEN THIS GIANT CAN WITHSTAND...
...A PUNCH THROWN WITH ALL MY STRENGTH--
*--BY THE SAINTS?!!*
MY FIST--IT'S AS IF I STRUCK NOTHING BUT AIR...
...OR A GHOST!
*WHOUWW!*
NO PHANTOM --THAT'S CERTAIN!
BWAP!
MANAGED TO ROLL WITH THE IMPACT, BUT I'LL BE A SOLID BRUISE FROM HEAD TO TOE IN THE MORNING--ASSUMING I LIVE SO LONG!

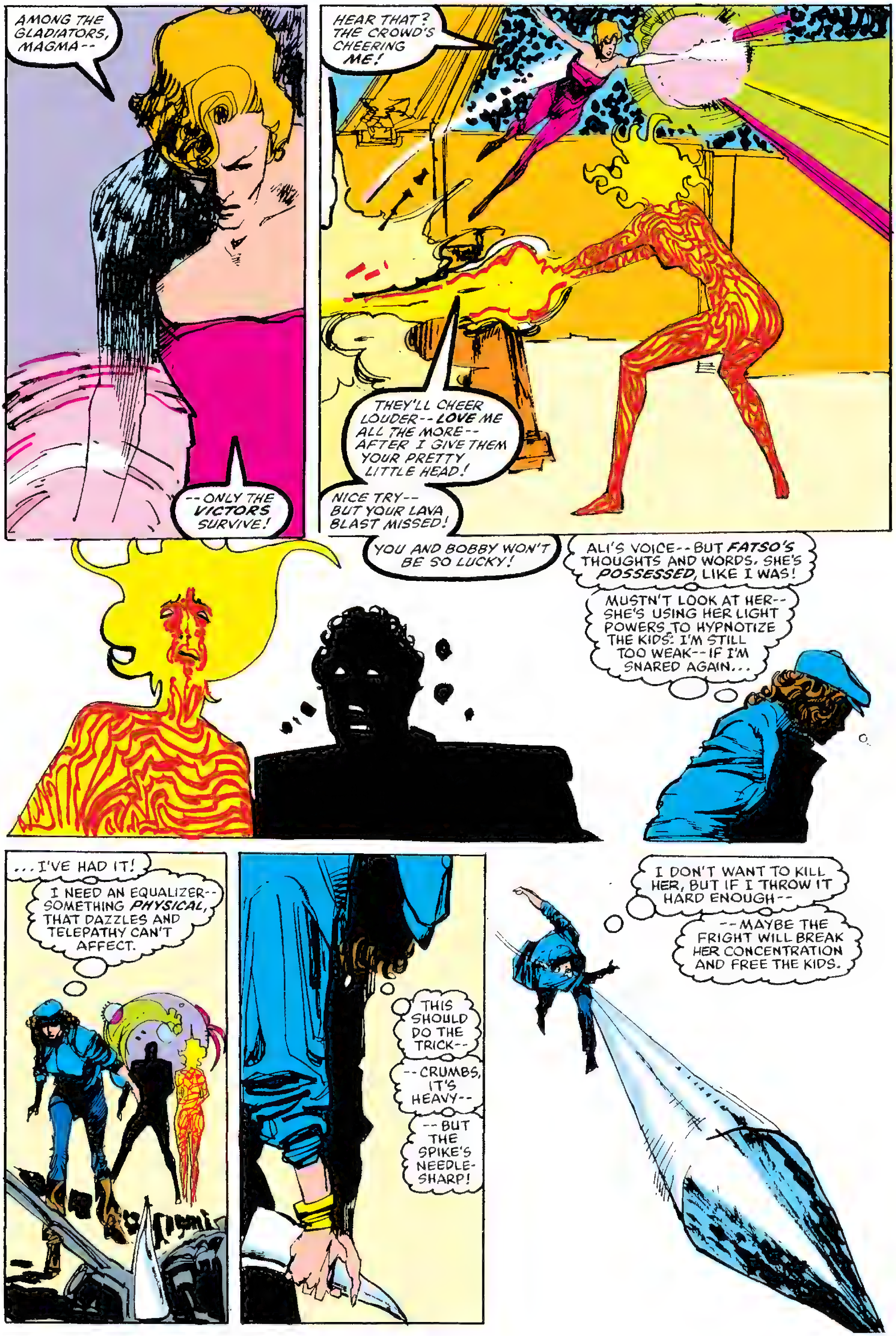

THAT, FOUL CREATURE--
--IS QUITE ENOUGH!
CCRAAAAK
AS MAGMA, THE YOUNG NOVA ROMANI CONTROLS THE VERY SUBSTANCE OF THE PLANET ITSELF. AMARA CAN MANIPULATE LAVA FLOWS, CREATE VOLCANOS OR, AS IN THIS CASE, OPEN A VIRTUALLY BOTTOMLESS FISSURE.
SHE ASSUMES GRAVITY WILL DO THE REST.
IMAGINE HER SURPRISE, HOWEVER, WHEN...
THE MONSTER DOES NOT FALL--IT FLOATS, IT WALKS ON AIR!
IMPOSSIBLE-- HOW CAN THAT BE?!?

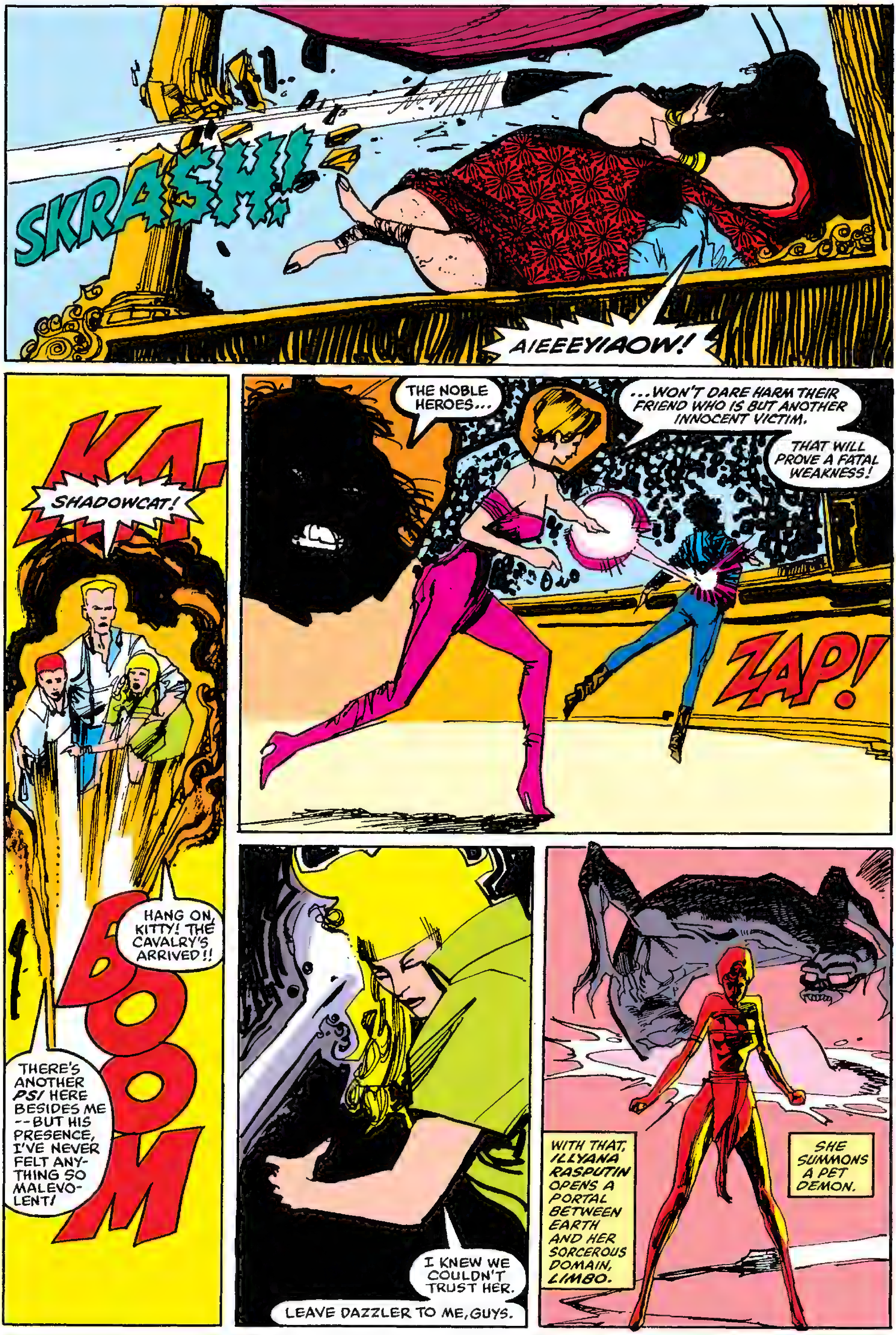

VERY WELL--LET US SEE HOW IT COPES WITH MY *FLAMES*--!
NO, MAGMA, *DON'T!*
THINK A MOMENT--WE *KNOW* THESE POWERS, AND WHO WIELDS THEM!
MAD AS IT SEEMS, I BELIEVE WE'RE FIGHTING *SHADOWCAT!*
PERCEPTIVE BRAT!
THE X-MAN IS PROVING SURPRISINGLY STUBBORN. POSSESSED AS SHE IS--TOTALLY UNDER MY MENTAL CONTROL--SHE STILL RESISTS!
*CHARLES XAVIER*, ROT HIS SOUL, TAUGHT HER WELL.
BUT *MY* WILL--
--MY *VENGEANCE*--
--*WILL NOT BE DENIED!!*
I'M CAUGHT!
CAN'T GET ANY DECENT LEVERAGE! AND I'VE RUN TOO LOW ON ENERGY, I LACK THE STRENGTH TO SHATTER THE MONSTER'S GRIP AND BREAK FREE!
LORD IN HEAVEN, FORGIVE MY SINS--I KNOW I DON'T DESERVE IT BUT I COULD REALLY USE A MINOR MIRACLE--
--KITTY, IF THIS *IS* YOU, *FIGHT!* DON'T DO THIS! DON'T LET THE GLADIATORS MAKE YOU A *MURDERER!*
IT'S NO USE--SHE CANNOT HEAR ME, I CAN BARELY HEAR MYSELF, OVER DAZZLER'S SONG! I'M DONE FOR.

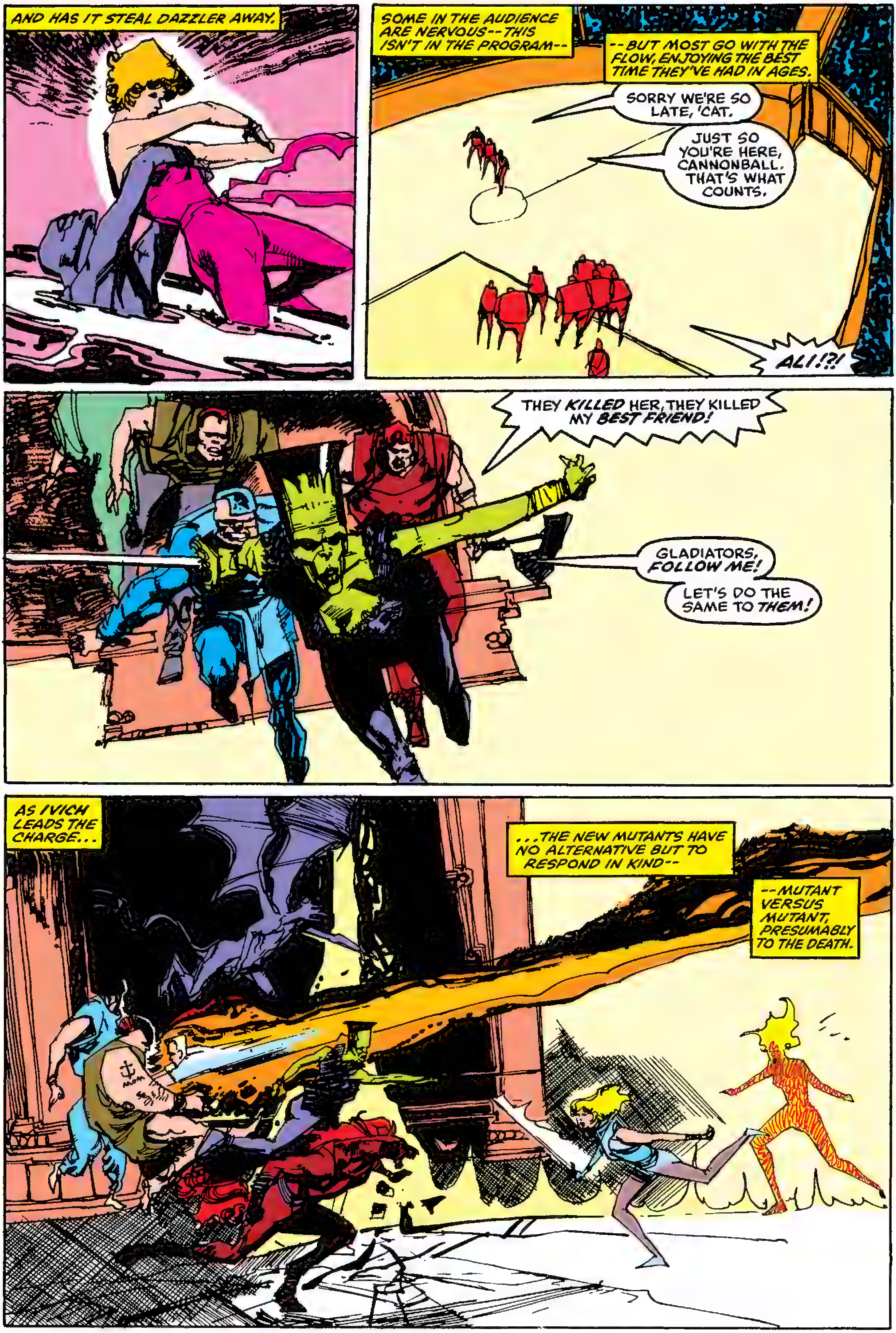

SUNSPOT!
WHAT AM I TO DO?! 'BERTO IS SUPER-STRONG BUT NOT INVULNERABLE. IF I UNLEASH A LAVA BLAST, HE COULD BE BURNED!
AND IF HIS SUSPICIONS ARE CORRECT, HOW CAN I EVEN TRY SUCH A THING?! IT WOULD MEAN SAVING ONE FRIEND--BY SACRIFICING ANOTHER!
THAT, BARBARIAN, IS PRECISELY THE POINT.
AGAIN, THE VOICE IN MY HEAD --WHY IS IT SO FAMILIAR?!
EHH--THE CREATURE HESITATES!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR--
--KILL HIM!

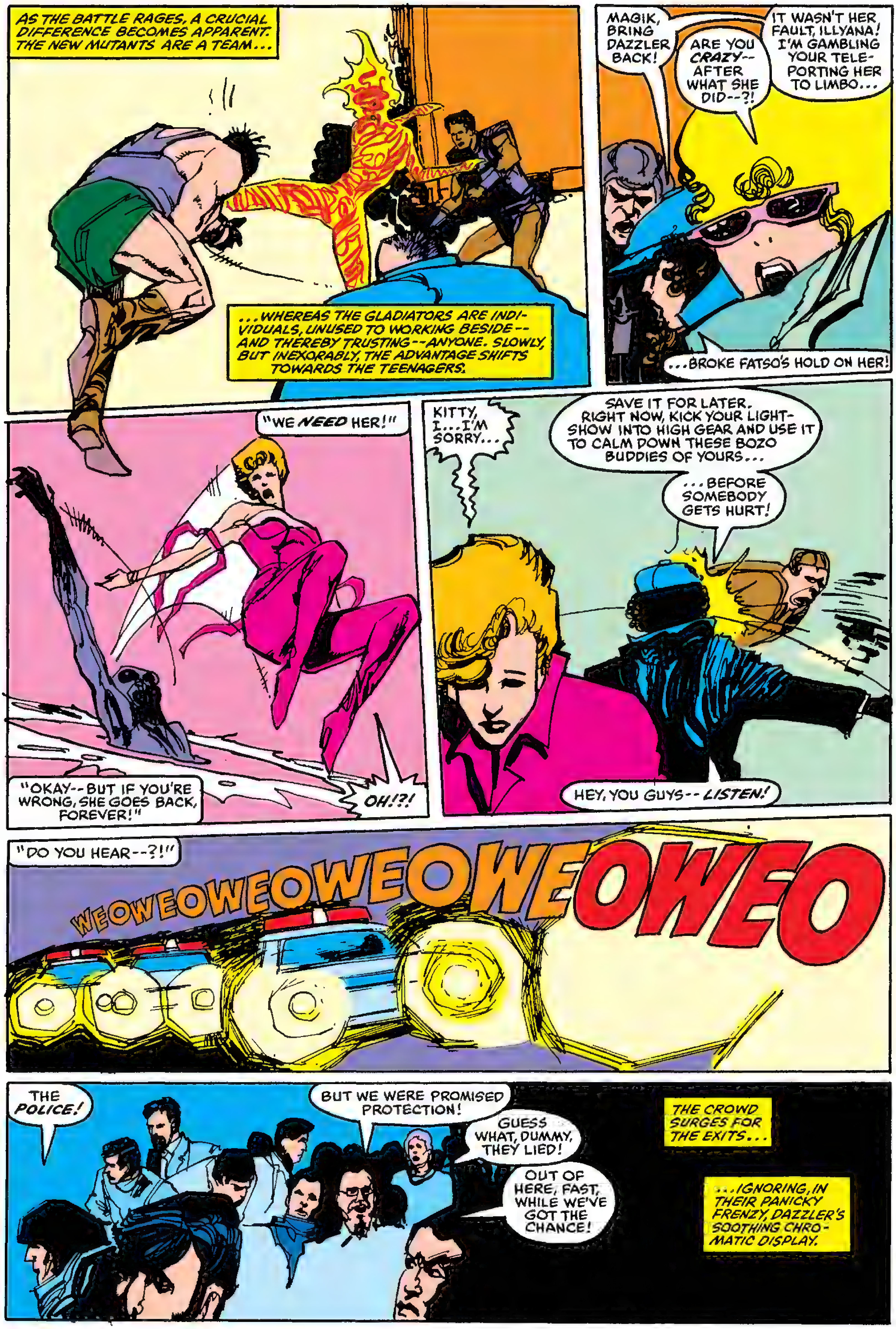

YOU ALL HEARD OUR *HOST,* FOLKS!
WE WANT *BLOOD!* WE WANT *DEATH!!*
KILL KILL KILL KILL KILL
NOT... TODAY, BLONDIE--
--AND *NOT ME!*
BETTER... *SCOOT,* BOBBY!
WITHOUT ME...TO ANIMATE THAT...BERSERK BUCKET...OF BOLTS...

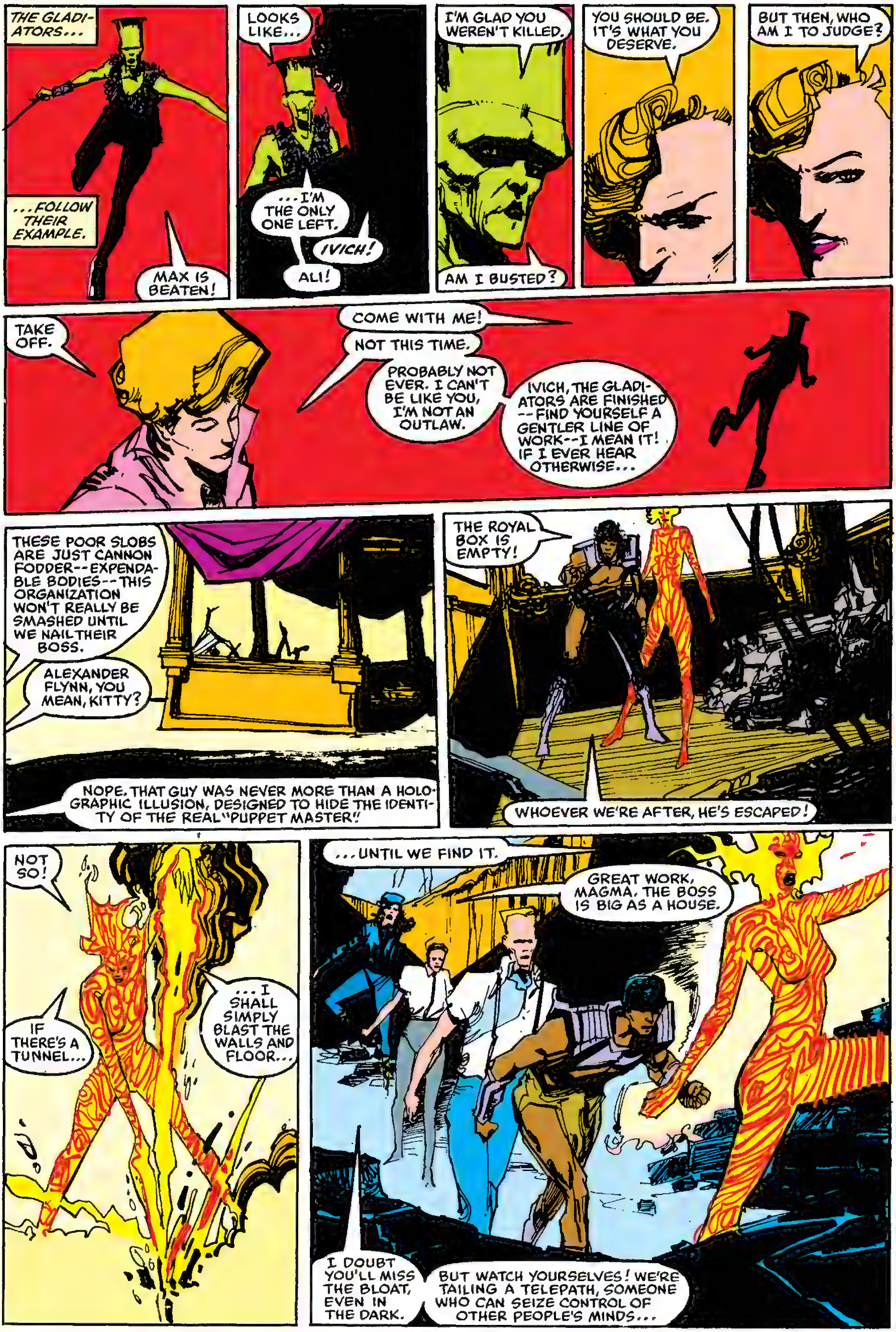

...HE GOES ALL TO *PIECES!*
*KITTY!*
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, WHAT HAPPENED--?! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO RESCUE US!
'FRAID...I GOT... SIDETRACKED.
*OHHHH,* MY ACHING HEAD--I'D GIVE ANYTHING FOR AN ASPIRIN!
*BOO!*
*FOUL!*
KILL THE GIRL, *KILL HER!*
THOSE-- *SWINE!*
IN MY HOME, IN *NOVA ROMA,* WE HAVE OUR OWN ARENA. BUT *NEVER* HAS A CROWD THERE LUSTED SO FOR *BLOOD!*
IF ANY MUST BE SPILLED IN THIS OBSCENITY OF A BATTLEGROUND--
--LET IT BE *THEIRS--UNNGNH!*

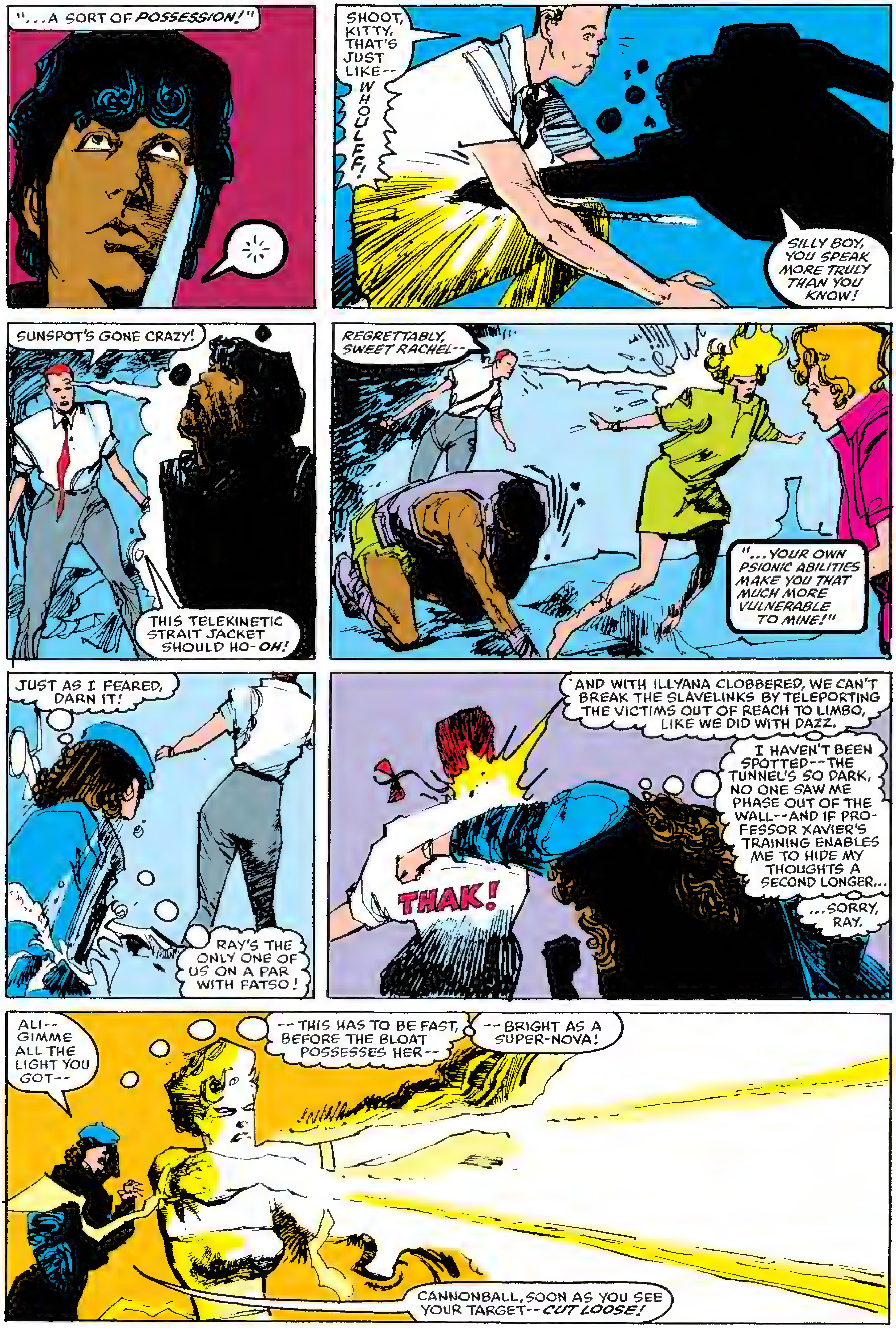

AMONG THE GLADIATORS, MAGMA--
--ONLY THE *VICTORS* SURVIVE!
HEAR THAT? THE CROWD'S CHEERING *ME!*
THEY'LL CHEER LOUDER--*LOVE* ME ALL THE MORE--AFTER I GIVE THEM YOUR PRETTY LITTLE HEAD!
NICE TRY--BUT YOUR LAVA BLAST MISSED!
YOU AND BOBBY WON'T BE SO LUCKY!
ALI'S VOICE--BUT *FATSO'S* THOUGHTS AND WORDS. SHE'S *POSSESSED,* LIKE I WAS!
MUSTN'T LOOK AT HER--SHE'S USING HER LIGHT POWERS TO HYPNOTIZE THE KIDS. I'M STILL TOO WEAK--IF I'M SNARED AGAIN...
...I'VE HAD IT!
I NEED AN EQUALIZER--SOMETHING *PHYSICAL,* THAT DAZZLES AND TELEPATHY CAN'T AFFECT.
THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK--
--CRUMBS, IT'S HEAVY--
--BUT THE SPIKE'S NEEDLE-SHARP!
I DON'T WANT TO KILL HER, BUT IF I THROW IT HARD ENOUGH--
--MAYBE THE FRIGHT WILL BREAK HER CONCENTRATION AND FREE THE KIDS.

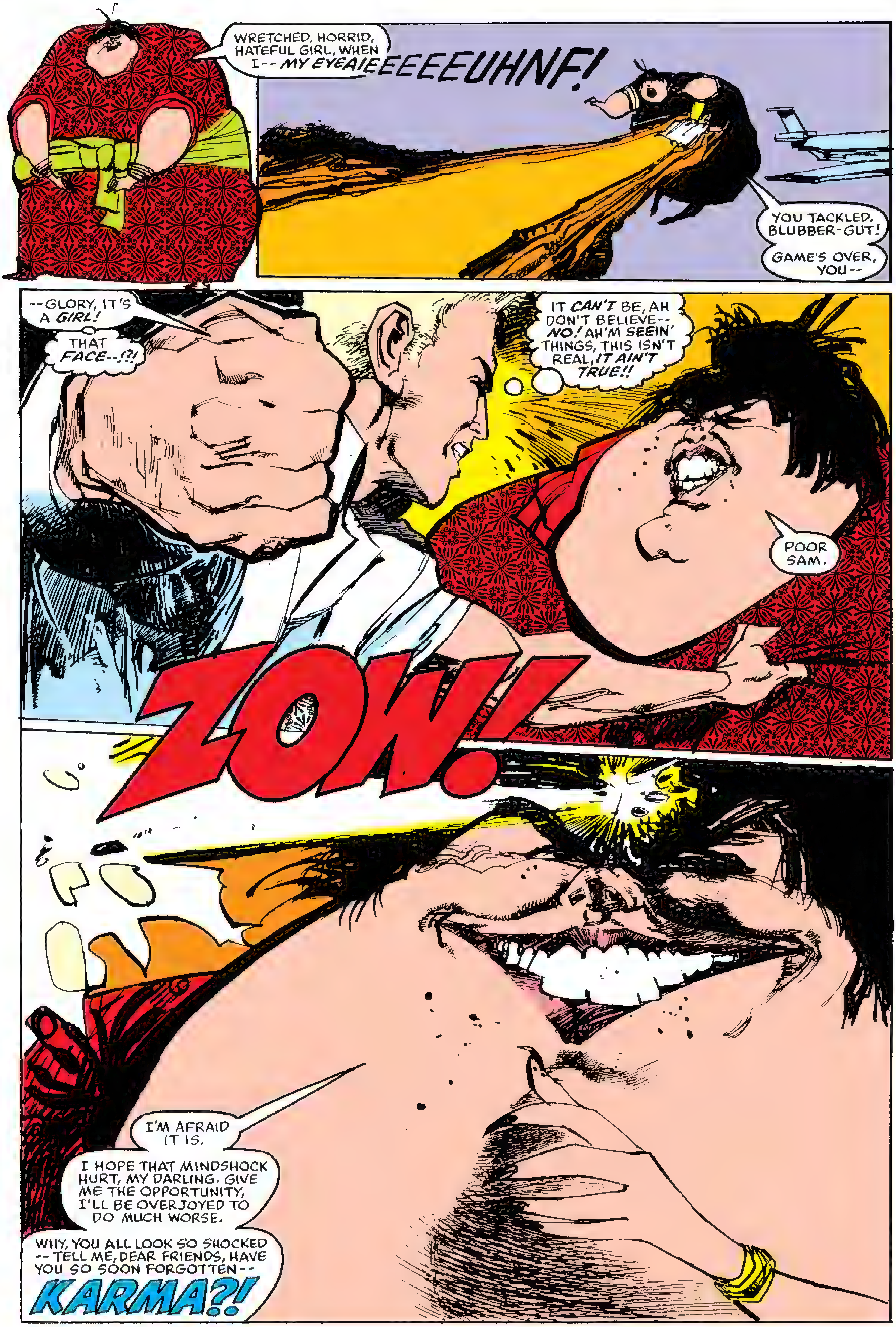

SKRASH!!
AIEEEYIAOW!
KA-
SHADOWCAT!
HANG ON, KITTY! THE CAVALRY'S ARRIVED!!
BOOM
THERE'S ANOTHER PSI HERE BESIDES ME --BUT HIS PRESENCE, I'VE NEVER FELT ANYTHING SO MALEVOLENT!
THE NOBLE HEROES...
...WON'T DARE HARM THEIR FRIEND WHO IS BUT ANOTHER INNOCENT VICTIM.
THAT WILL PROVE A FATAL WEAKNESS!
ZAP!
I KNEW WE COULDN'T TRUST HER.
LEAVE DAZZLER TO ME, GUYS.
WITH THAT, ILLYANA RASPUTIN OPENS A PORTAL BETWEEN EARTH AND HER SORCEROUS DOMAIN, LIMBO.
SHE SUMMONS A PET DEMON.

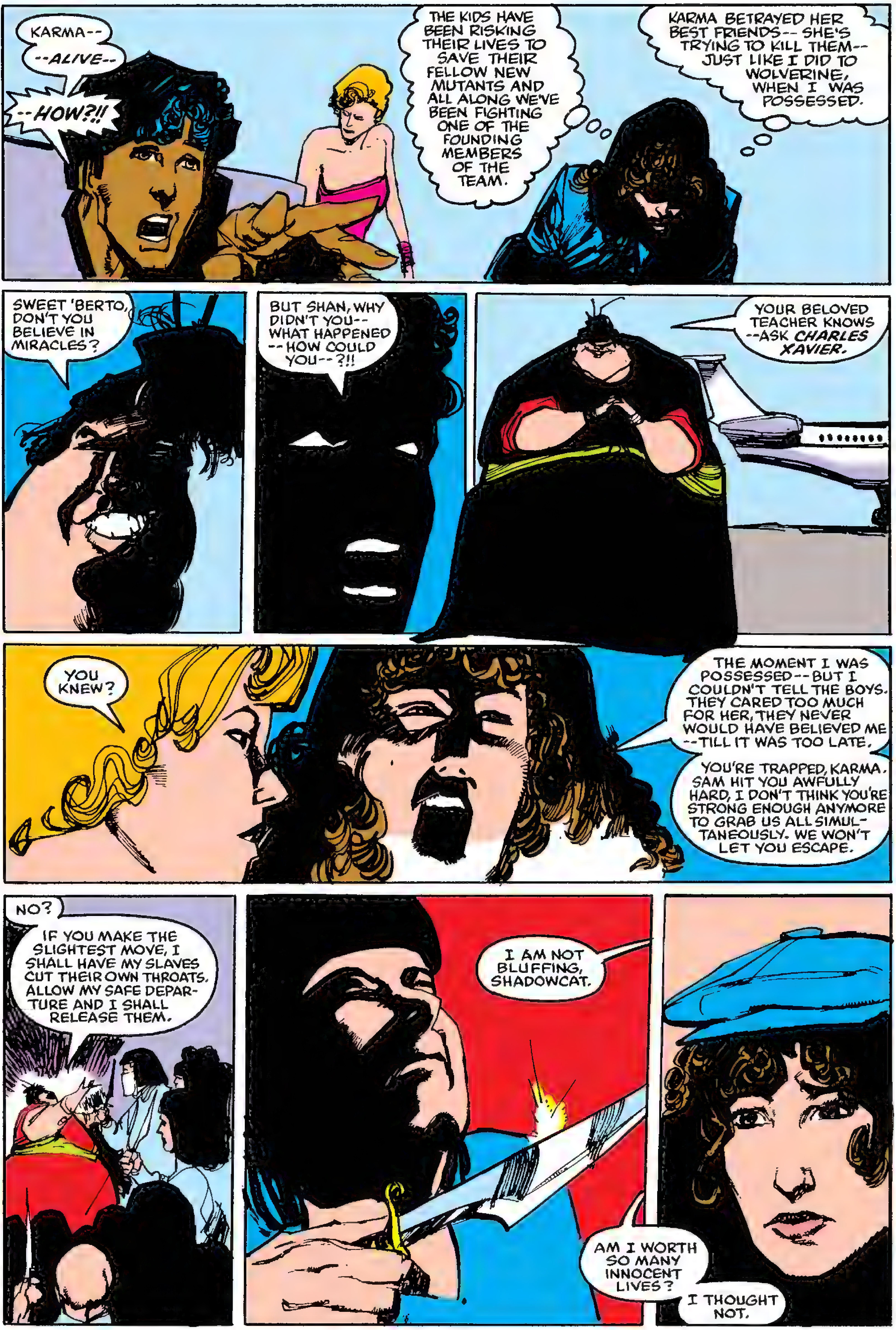

AND HAS IT STEAL DAZZLER AWAY.
SOME IN THE AUDIENCE ARE NERVOUS--THIS ISN'T IN THE PROGRAM--
--BUT MOST GO WITH THE FLOW, ENJOYING THE BEST TIME THEY'VE HAD IN AGES.
SORRY WE'RE SO LATE, 'CAT.
JUST SO YOU'RE HERE, CANNONBALL. THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.
ALI!?!
THEY *KILLED* HER, THEY KILLED MY *BEST FRIEND!*
GLADIATORS, *FOLLOW ME!*
LET'S DO THE SAME TO *THEM!*
AS IVICH LEADS THE CHARGE...
...THE NEW MUTANTS HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RESPOND IN KIND--
--MUTANT VERSUS MUTANT, PRESUMABLY TO THE DEATH.

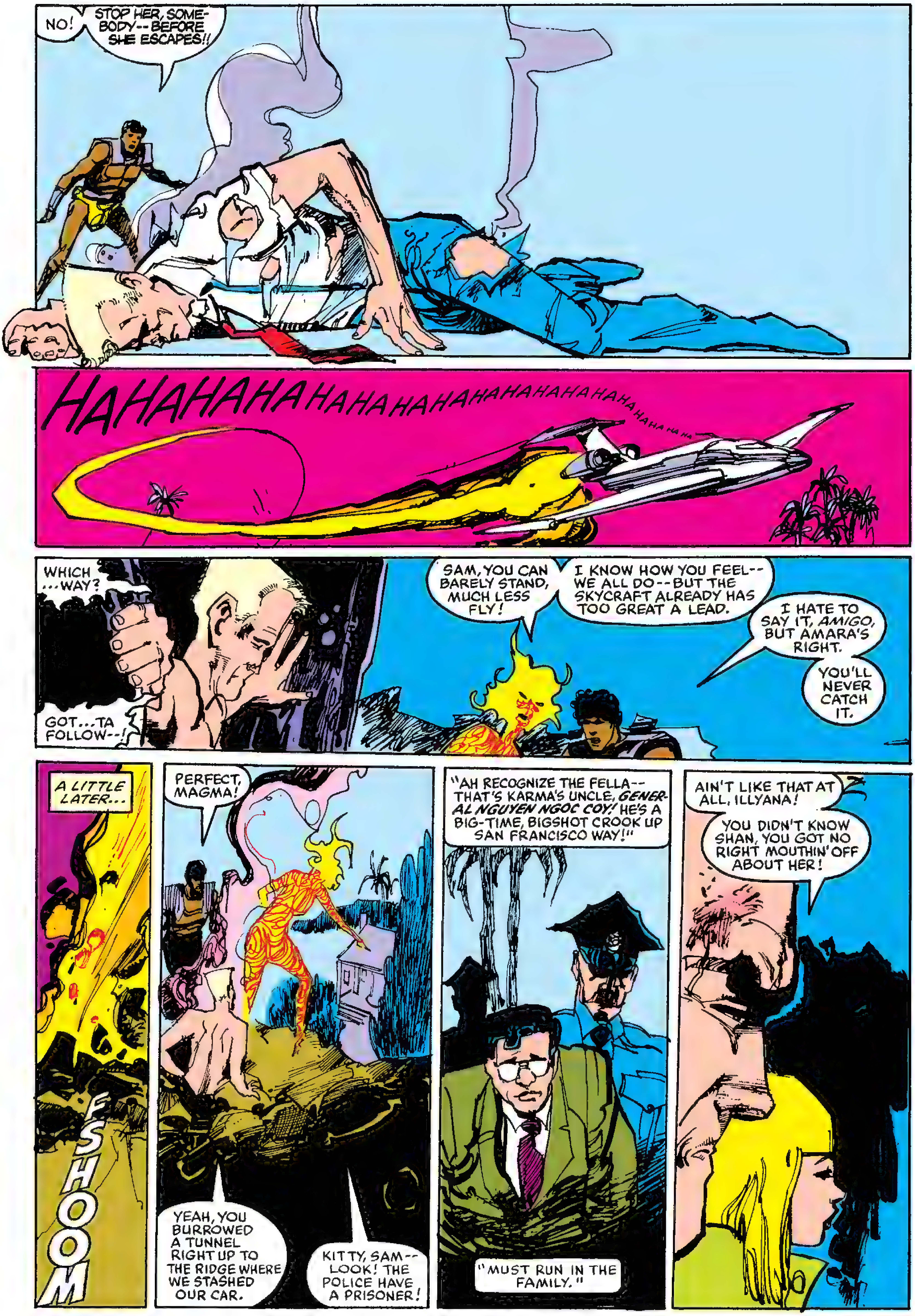

AS THE BATTLE RAGES, A CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE BECOMES APPARENT. THE NEW MUTANTS ARE A TEAM...
...WHEREAS THE GLADIATORS ARE INDIVIDUALS, UNUSED TO WORKING BESIDE--AND THEREBY TRUSTING--ANYONE. SLOWLY, BUT INEXORABLY, THE ADVANTAGE SHIFTS TOWARDS THE TEENAGERS.
MAGIK, BRING DAZZLER BACK!
ARE YOU *CRAZY*--AFTER WHAT SHE DID--?!
IT WASN'T HER FAULT, ILLYANA! I'M GAMBLING YOUR TELEPORTING HER TO LIMBO...
...BROKE FATSO'S HOLD ON HER!
"WE *NEED* HER!"
"OKAY--BUT IF YOU'RE WRONG, SHE GOES BACK, FOREVER!"
OH!?!
KITTY, I...I'M SORRY...
SAVE IT FOR LATER. RIGHT NOW, KICK YOUR LIGHT-SHOW INTO HIGH GEAR AND USE IT TO CALM DOWN THESE BOZO BUDDIES OF YOURS...
...BEFORE SOMEBODY GETS HURT!
HEY, YOU GUYS--*LISTEN!*
"DO YOU HEAR--?!"
WEOWEOWEOWEOWEOWEOWEO
THE *POLICE!*
BUT WE WERE PROMISED PROTECTION!
GUESS WHAT, DUMMY, THEY LIED!
OUT OF HERE, FAST, WHILE WE'VE GOT THE CHANCE!
THE CROWD SURGES FOR THE EXITS...
...IGNORING, IN THEIR PANICKY FRENZY, DAZZLER'S SOOTHING CHROMATIC DISPLAY.

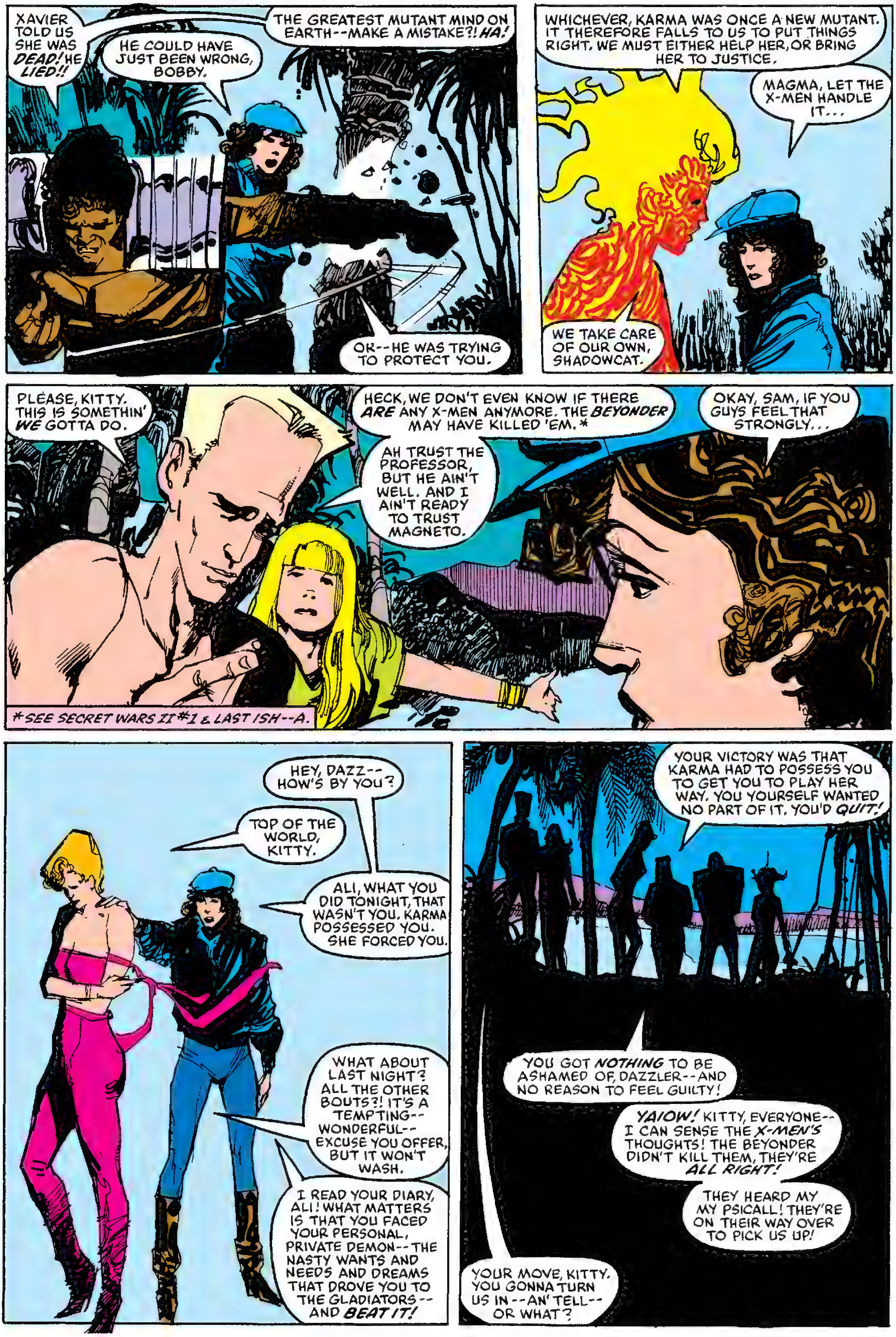

THE GLADIATORS...
...FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE.
MAX IS BEATEN!
LOOKS LIKE...
...I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT.
IVICH!
ALI!
I'M GLAD YOU WEREN'T KILLED.
AM I BUSTED?
YOU SHOULD BE. IT'S WHAT YOU DESERVE.
BUT THEN, WHO AM I TO JUDGE?
TAKE OFF.
COME WITH ME!
NOT THIS TIME.
PROBABLY NOT EVER. I CAN'T BE LIKE YOU, I'M NOT AN OUTLAW.
IVICH, THE GLADIATORS ARE FINISHED --FIND YOURSELF A GENTLER LINE OF WORK--I MEAN IT! IF I EVER HEAR OTHERWISE...
THESE POOR SLOBS ARE JUST CANNON FODDER--EXPENDABLE BODIES--THIS ORGANIZATION WON'T REALLY BE SMASHED UNTIL WE NAIL THEIR BOSS.
ALEXANDER FLYNN, YOU MEAN, KITTY?
NOPE. THAT GUY WAS NEVER MORE THAN A HOLOGRAPHIC ILLUSION, DESIGNED TO HIDE THE IDENTITY OF THE REAL "PUPPET MASTER."
THE ROYAL BOX IS EMPTY!
WHOEVER WE'RE AFTER, HE'S ESCAPED!
NOT SO!
IF THERE'S A TUNNEL...
...I SHALL SIMPLY BLAST THE WALLS AND FLOOR...
...UNTIL WE FIND IT.
GREAT WORK, MAGMA. THE BOSS IS BIG AS A HOUSE.
I DOUBT YOU'LL MISS THE BLOAT, EVEN IN THE DARK.
BUT WATCH YOURSELVES! WE'RE TAILING A TELEPATH, SOMEONE WHO CAN SEIZE CONTROL OF OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS...

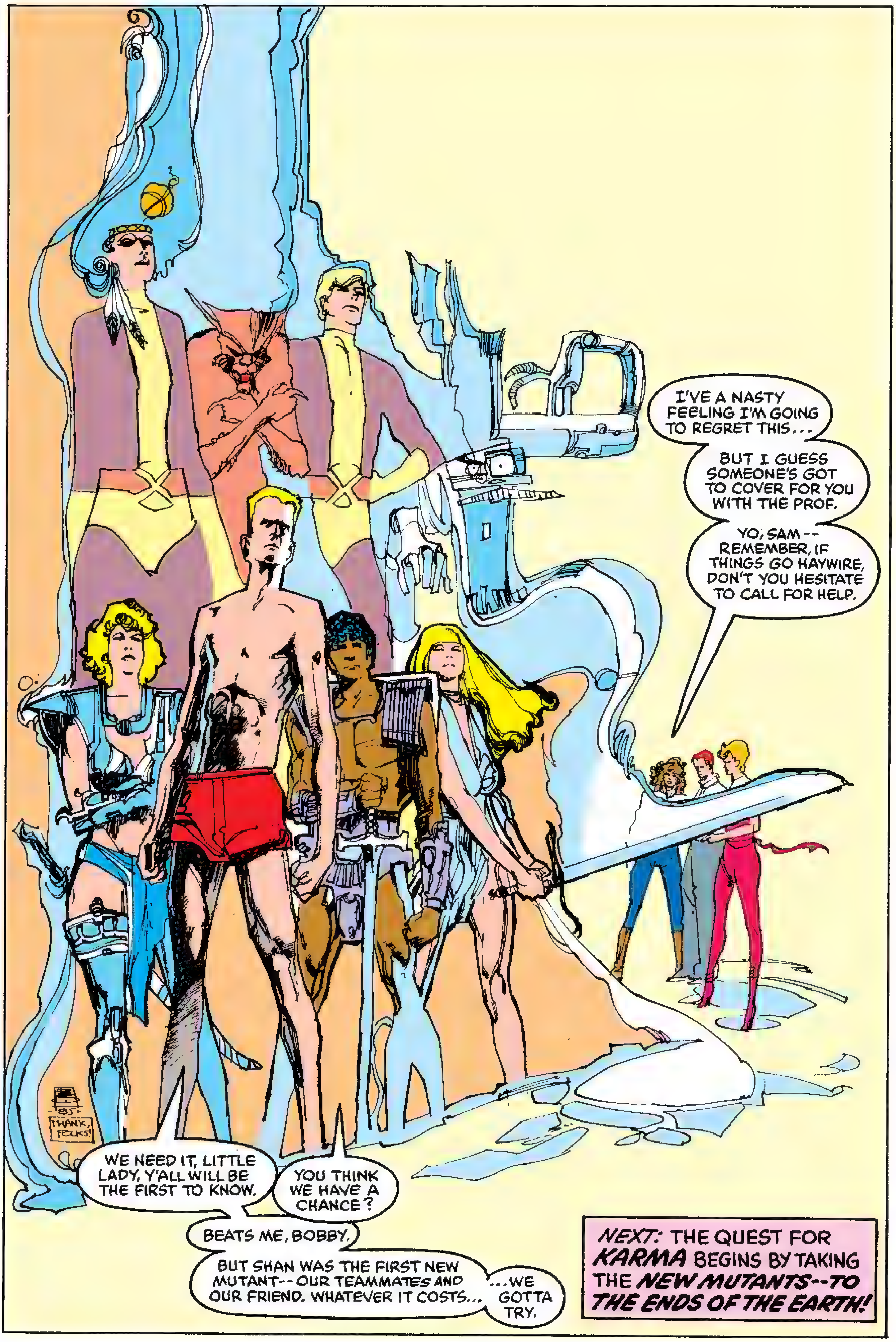

"...A SORT OF *POSSESSION!*"
SHOOT, KITTY, THAT'S JUST LIKE-- WHOULFF!
SILLY BOY, YOU SPEAK MORE TRULY THAN YOU KNOW!
SUNSPOT'S GONE CRAZY!
THIS TELEKINETIC STRAIT JACKET SHOULD HO-*OH!*
REGRETTABLY, SWEET RACHEL--
"...YOUR OWN PSIONIC ABILITIES MAKE YOU THAT MUCH MORE VULNERABLE TO MINE!"
JUST AS I FEARED, DARN IT!
RAY'S THE ONLY ONE OF US ON A PAR WITH FATSO!
AND WITH ILLYANA CLOBBERED, WE CAN'T BREAK THE SLAVELINKS BY TELEPORTING THE VICTIMS OUT OF REACH TO LIMBO, LIKE WE DID WITH DAZZ.
I HAVEN'T BEEN SPOTTED--THE TUNNEL'S SO DARK, NO ONE SAW ME PHASE OUT OF THE WALL--AND IF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S TRAINING ENABLES ME TO HIDE MY THOUGHTS A SECOND LONGER...
THAK!
...SORRY, RAY.
ALI--GIMME ALL THE LIGHT YOU GOT--
--THIS HAS TO BE FAST, BEFORE THE BLOAT POSSESSES HER--
--BRIGHT AS A SUPER-NOVA!
CANNONBALL, SOON AS YOU SEE YOUR TARGET--*CUT LOOSE!*


WRETCHED, HORRID, HATEFUL GIRL, WHEN I-- MY EYEAIEEEEEEUHNF!
YOU TACKLED, BLUBBER-GUT!
GAME'S OVER, YOU--
--GLORY, IT'S A GIRL!
THAT FACE--!?!
IT CAN'T BE, AH DON'T BELIEVE-- NO! AH'M SEEIN' THINGS, THIS ISN'T REAL, IT AIN'T TRUE!!
POOR SAM.
ZOW!
I'M AFRAID IT IS.
I HOPE THAT MINDSHOCK HURT, MY DARLING. GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY, I'LL BE OVERJOYED TO DO MUCH WORSE.
WHY, YOU ALL LOOK SO SHOCKED -- TELL ME, DEAR FRIENDS, HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN -- KARMA?!


KARMA--
--ALIVE--
--HOW?!!
THE KIDS HAVE BEEN RISKING THEIR LIVES TO SAVE THEIR FELLOW NEW MUTANTS AND ALL ALONG WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE TEAM.
KARMA BETRAYED HER BEST FRIENDS-- SHE'S TRYING TO KILL THEM-- JUST LIKE I DID TO WOLVERINE, WHEN I WAS POSSESSED.
SWEET 'BERTO, DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?
BUT SHAN, WHY DIDN'T YOU-- WHAT HAPPENED --HOW COULD YOU--?!!
YOUR BELOVED TEACHER KNOWS --ASK CHARLES XAVIER.
YOU KNEW?
THE MOMENT I WAS POSSESSED--BUT I COULDN'T TELL THE BOYS. THEY CARED TOO MUCH FOR HER, THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME --TILL IT WAS TOO LATE.
YOU'RE TRAPPED, KARMA. SAM HIT YOU AWFULLY HARD, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE STRONG ENOUGH ANYMORE TO GRAB US ALL SIMULTANEOUSLY. WE WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE.
NO?
IF YOU MAKE THE SLIGHTEST MOVE, I SHALL HAVE MY SLAVES CUT THEIR OWN THROATS. ALLOW MY SAFE DEPARTURE AND I SHALL RELEASE THEM.
I AM NOT BLUFFING, SHADOWCAT.
AM I WORTH SO MANY INNOCENT LIVES?
I THOUGHT NOT.

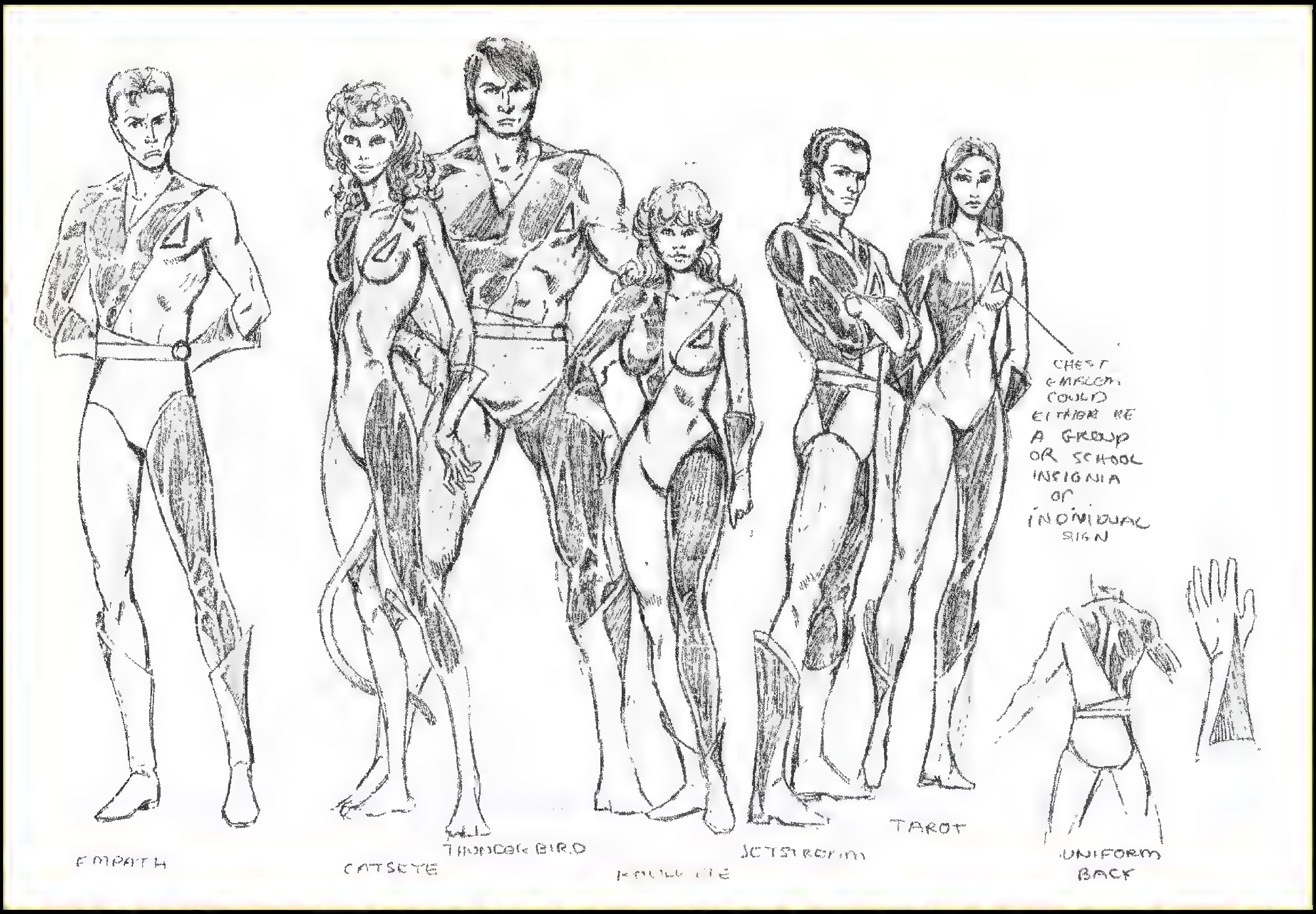

NO!
STOP HER, SOME-BODY-- BEFORE SHE ESCAPES!!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
WHICH ...WAY?
GOT...TA FOLLOW--!
SAM, YOU CAN BARELY STAND, MUCH LESS FLY!
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL-- WE ALL DO-- BUT THE SKYCRAFT ALREADY HAS TOO GREAT A LEAD.
I HATE TO SAY IT, *AMIGO,* BUT AMARA'S RIGHT.
YOU'LL NEVER CATCH IT.
A LITTLE LATER...
FSHOOM
PERFECT, MAGMA!
YEAH, YOU BURROWED A TUNNEL RIGHT UP TO THE RIDGE WHERE WE STASHED OUR CAR.
KITTY, SAM-- LOOK! THE POLICE HAVE A PRISONER!
"AH RECOGNIZE THE FELLA-- THAT'S KARMA'S UNCLE, *GENERAL NGUYEN NGOC COY!* HE'S A BIG-TIME, BIGSHOT CROOK UP SAN FRANCISCO WAY!"
"MUST RUN IN THE FAMILY."
AIN'T LIKE THAT AT ALL, ILLYANA!
YOU DIDN'T KNOW SHAN, YOU GOT NO RIGHT MOUTHIN' OFF ABOUT HER!


XAVIER TOLD US SHE WAS *DEAD!* HE *LIED!!*
HE COULD HAVE JUST BEEN WRONG, BOBBY.
THE GREATEST MUTANT MIND ON EARTH--MAKE A MISTAKE?! *HA!*
OR--HE WAS TRYING TO PROTECT YOU.
WHICHEVER, KARMA WAS ONCE A NEW MUTANT. IT THEREFORE FALLS TO US TO PUT THINGS RIGHT. WE MUST EITHER HELP HER, OR BRING HER TO JUSTICE.
MAGMA, LET THE X-MEN HANDLE IT...
WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN, SHADOWCAT.
PLEASE, KITTY. THIS IS SOMETHIN' *WE* GOTTA DO.
HECK, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THERE *ARE* ANY X-MEN ANYMORE. THE *BEYONDER* MAY HAVE KILLED 'EM.*
AH TRUST THE PROFESSOR, BUT HE AIN'T WELL. AND I AIN'T READY TO TRUST MAGNETO.
OKAY, SAM, IF YOU GUYS FEEL THAT STRONGLY...
*SEE SECRET WARS II #1 & LAST ISH--A.
HEY, DAZZ--HOW'S BY YOU?
TOP OF THE WORLD, KITTY.
ALI, WHAT YOU DID TONIGHT, THAT WASN'T YOU. KARMA POSSESSED YOU. SHE FORCED YOU.
WHAT ABOUT LAST NIGHT? ALL THE OTHER BOUTS?! IT'S A TEMPTING--WONDERFUL--EXCUSE YOU OFFER, BUT IT WON'T WASH.
I READ YOUR DIARY, ALI! WHAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU FACED YOUR PERSONAL, PRIVATE DEMON--THE NASTY WANTS AND NEEDS AND DREAMS THAT DROVE YOU TO THE GLADIATORS--AND *BEAT IT!*
YOUR VICTORY WAS THAT KARMA HAD TO POSSESS YOU TO GET YOU TO PLAY HER WAY. YOU YOURSELF WANTED NO PART OF IT. YOU'D *QUIT!*
YOU GOT *NOTHING* TO BE ASHAMED OF, DAZZLER--AND NO REASON TO FEEL GUILTY!
*YAIOW!* KITTY, EVERYONE--I CAN SENSE THE *X-MEN'S* THOUGHTS! THE BEYONDER DIDN'T KILL THEM, THEY'RE *ALL RIGHT!*
THEY HEARD MY MY PSICALL! THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY OVER TO PICK US UP!
YOUR MOVE, KITTY. YOU GONNA TURN US IN--AN' TELL--OR WHAT?

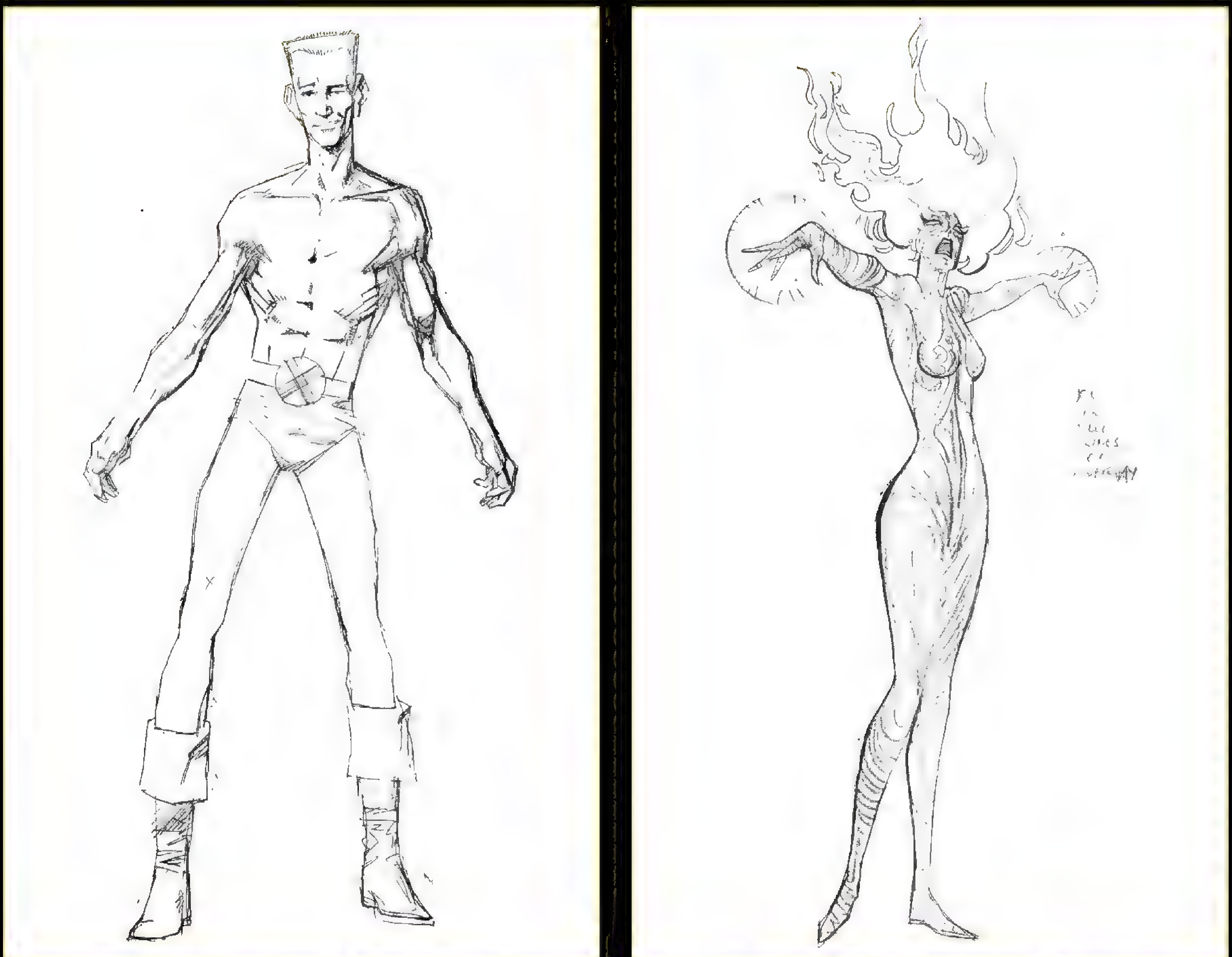

I'VE A NASTY FEELING I'M GOING TO REGRET THIS...
BUT I GUESS SOMEONE'S GOT TO COVER FOR YOU WITH THE PROF.
YO, SAM -- REMEMBER, IF THINGS GO HAYWIRE, DON'T YOU HESITATE TO CALL FOR HELP.
BS '85 THANX, FOLKS!
WE NEED IT, LITTLE LADY. Y'ALL WILL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW.
YOU THINK WE HAVE A CHANCE?
BEATS ME, BOBBY.
BUT SHAN WAS THE FIRST NEW MUTANT-- OUR TEAMMATES AND OUR FRIEND. WHATEVER IT COSTS...
...WE GOTTA TRY.
NEXT: THE QUEST FOR KARMA BEGINS BY TAKING THE NEW MUTANTS--TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!

FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNALS OF CHARLES XAVIER
MANUEL ALFONSO RODRIGO DE LA ROCHA/EMPATH
ONE OF THE HELLIONS, A BAND OF SUPER-POWERED MUTANTS GATHERED BY EMMA FROST, THE WHITE QUEEN OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB, IN HER ROLE AS HEADMISTRESS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY, A PRESTIGIOUS NEW ENGLAND PRIVATE SCHOOL.
HE IS QUITE SIMPLY WHAT HIS NAME IMPLIES, SOMEONE WHO CAN MANIPULATE THE EMOTIONS OF SENTIENT BEINGS IN HIS IMMEDIATE VICINITY. HE CAN MAKE THEM FEEL JOY, SADNESS, FEAR, RAGE, LOVE, HATE--ANYTHING. THE EFFECT SEEMS TRANSITORY AND IT IS AS YET UNKNOWN WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN WREAK A PERMANENT CHANGE IN A SUBJECT'S EMOTIONAL STATE.
REGRETTABLY, HE ENJOYS UTILIZING THIS TALENT. PEOPLE, TO HIM, SEEM NO MORE THAN OBJECTS, SERVANTS PROVIDED TO GRATIFY HIS NEEDS AND WHIMS, TOYS PROVIDED FOR HIS AMUSEMENT. IF HE PERCEIVES AN INSULT, HE GENERALLY ATTEMPTS TO AVENGE IT IN THE CRUELEST, MOST HURTFUL MANNER POSSIBLE.
THERE IS NO KINDNESS IN HIM, NO DECENCY, NO GENEROSITY--IF THERE IS A LIVING DEFINITION OF EVIL, IT MAY WELL BE HE.

MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY
HEADMISTRESS' EVALUATION-- SHARON SMITH/CATSEYE
AGE UNKNOWN/INDETERMINATE, ESTIMATED AT ROUGHLY 14-15. FERAL CHILD, WITH NO MEMORY OF ANY ENVIRONMENT SAVE THE MANHATTAN UNDERGROUND WHERE SHE GREW UP AND THE FELINE WHO ACTED AS SURROGATE MOTHER--REFERENCE, "MOWGLI" SYNDROME, RUDYARD KIPLING'S JUNGLE BOOK.
PHENOMENAL IQ--COMPARABLE, POSSIBLY SUPERIOR, TO KITTY PRYDE'S--TOTAL RECALL, PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY. PROGRESSED FROM TOTAL ILLITERACY TO UPPER-GRADE SCHOOL READING LEVELS IN LESS THAN A YEAR. FORCED TO PROVIDE FOR HERSELF SINCE EARLIEST INFANCY; ENJOYS THE HUNT. IF HUNGRY, WILL NOT HESITATE TO KILL--IN MANY WAYS, MORE ANIMAL THAN PERSON.
SINCE IT WAS I WHO FOUND HER, SHE HAS EMOTIONALLY ATTACHED HERSELF TO ME, RELATING TO ME AS A SURROGATE MOTHER.
THIS RELATIONSHIP ALLOWS FOR EXPLOITATION BY THE HELLFIRE CLUB--BUT CONSIDERABLE CARE MUST BE TAKEN; HER YOUTH AND COMPARATIVE LACK OF SOPHISTICATION BELIE A FEROCIOUS INTELLIGENCE. SHE KNOWS WHEN SHE IS LIED TO AND WILL NOT COUNTENANCE THAT. MOREOVER, SHE AS YET NEITHER COMPREHENDS NOR ACCEPTS THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN HELLIONS AND XAVIER'S NEW MUTANTS; SHE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THOSE WHO ARE HER PERSONAL FRIENDS MUST BE HER TEAM'S FOES.


CHEST EMBLEM COULD EITHER BE A GROUP OR SCHOOL INSIGNIA OR INDIVIDUAL SIGN
EMPATH
CATSEYE
THUNDERBIRD
ROULETTE
JETSTREAM
TAROT
UNIFORM BACK

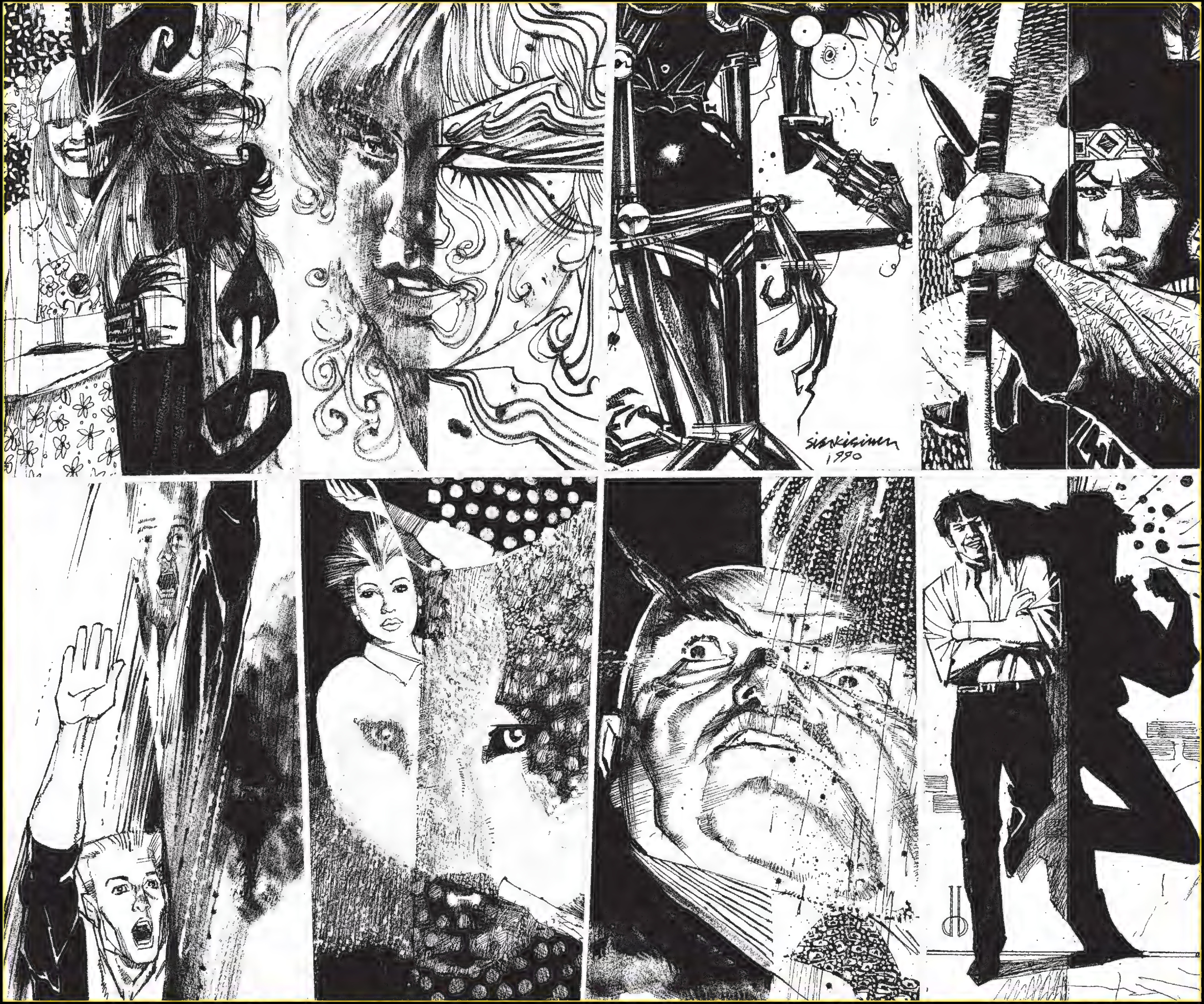
HELLIONS CHARACTER DESIGNS BY BOB McLEOD



NEW MUTANTS CHARACTER DESIGNS BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

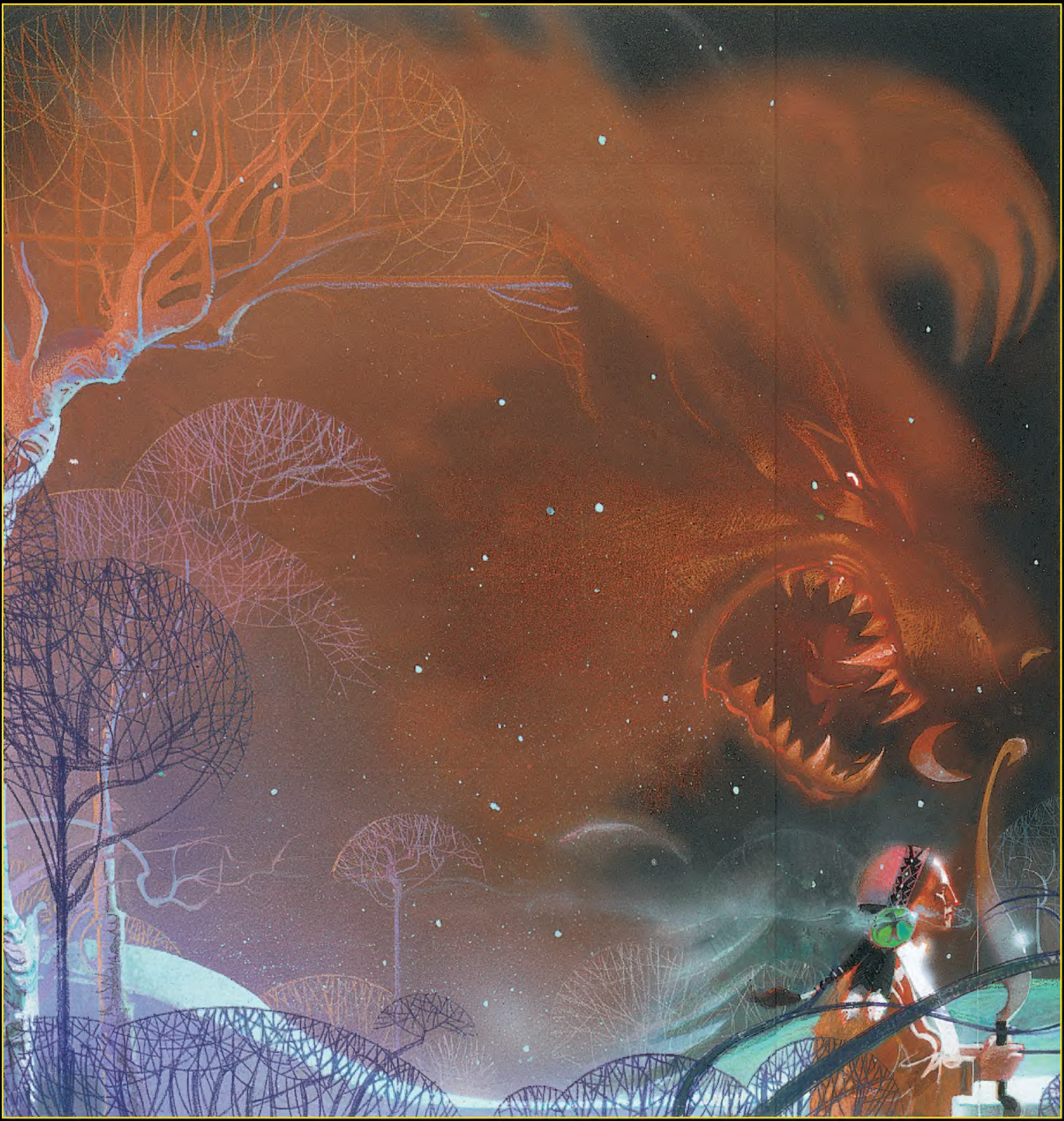
DON'T CALL 'EM
X-BABIES
ANYMORE!
BILL SIENKIEWICZ
FIND OUT WHAT'S NEW IN
THE NEW MUTANTS
BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BILL SIENKIEWICZ
STARTS WITH ISSUE #18. SEE EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW IN MARVEL AGE #16.

SPRING 1984 *NEW MUTANTS* HOUSE AD BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ


SIENKIEWICZ
1990

*NEW MUTANTS: THE DEMON BEAR SAGA TPB* (1991) FRONTISPIECE ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

## *NEW MUTANTS: THE DEMON BEAR SAGA TPB* (1991) FULL COVER ART AND AFTERWORD BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ



I've chosen to put myself in a difficult position, i.e. to offer some ruminations on the issues that compose this collection. It's particularly difficult because it all seems rather premature.

Part of me thinks that compilations like these (and attendant observations by involved parties) should only come about after years and years of work by the creators. In that capacity, the compilation serves as a time capsule, not a rerun; nor as the answer to a question that was never asked.

The other part of me is completely aware that many of these collections have indeed been requested, if only by those with their eyes fixed squarely upon the bottom line. And so, here I am, difficult of position, tangled of tongue, attempting to dispassionately discuss this collaborative saga.

It's awkward to look at these issues now. Time and social temperament have had their effect. Chris Claremont has since gone on to even bigger things, a novel included. Editors Ann Nocenti and Louise Simonson have both made their marks as writers.

So things keep moving.

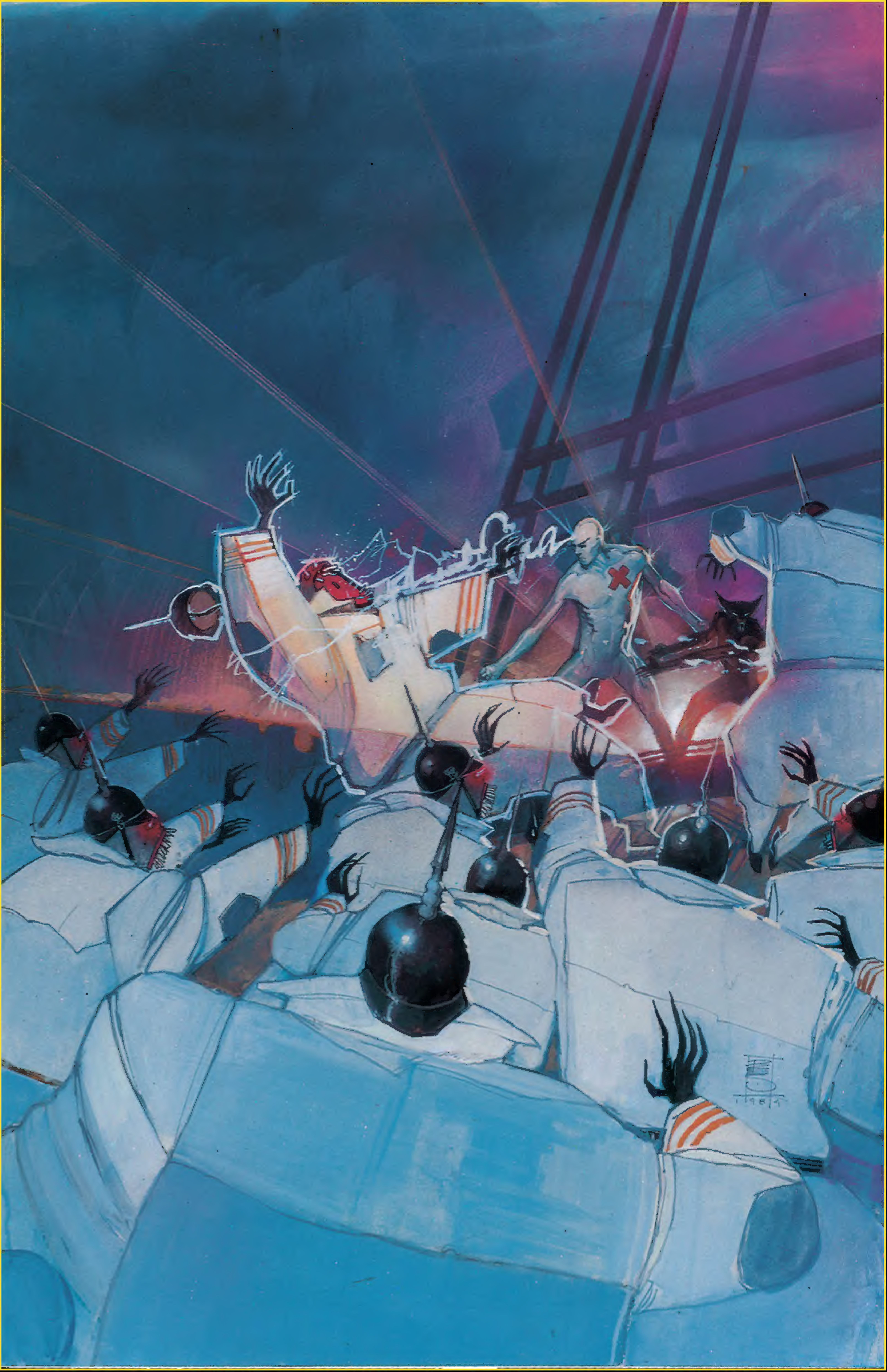
I do recall that when Chris and I began these issues, we ran into quite a polarized reaction. People either loved the work or hated it. For me, coming off three years of *Moon Knight*, the chance to break down a few more barriers was irresistible. But readers saw the issues you now hold and their response was the bane of every freelancer who ever walked by an editor's office begging for more money or time or both: "Your old stuff was better."

And so…

Here it is, years later…Styles of story and art have changed, and wouldn't you know it? This stuff is the old stuff!

So…what was the question?

—Bill Sienkiewicz



**BILL SIENKIEWICZ'S ORIGINAL COVER PAINTING FOR *NEW MUTANTS #28* WAS LOST IN THE MAIL, FORCING HIM TO PAINT ANOTHER PIECE FOR THE ISSUE. THE ORIGINAL WAS EVENTUALLY LOCATED AND RETURNED TO MARVEL AND SAW PRINT IN *MARVEL AGE #28*.**

## THE *MARVEL AGE* INTERVIEW: BILL SIENKIEWICZ
### BY MARK LERER
### ARTICLE EXCERPT FROM *MARVEL AGE #28*

ML: That brings us to *The New Mutants*. Why did you return to doing a regular series?

BS: I had been away from regular comics too long. I had done a few fill-ins here and there, but I was aching to get back to a regular book. My name had been out of mainstream comics for too long, and I didn't want to be forgotten. Chris Claremont first approached me to do two issues of *The New Mutants*, and soon after that he asked me if I'd like to do the book on a regular basis. I thought about it for about 30 seconds and said yes! I thought it would be interesting and fun.

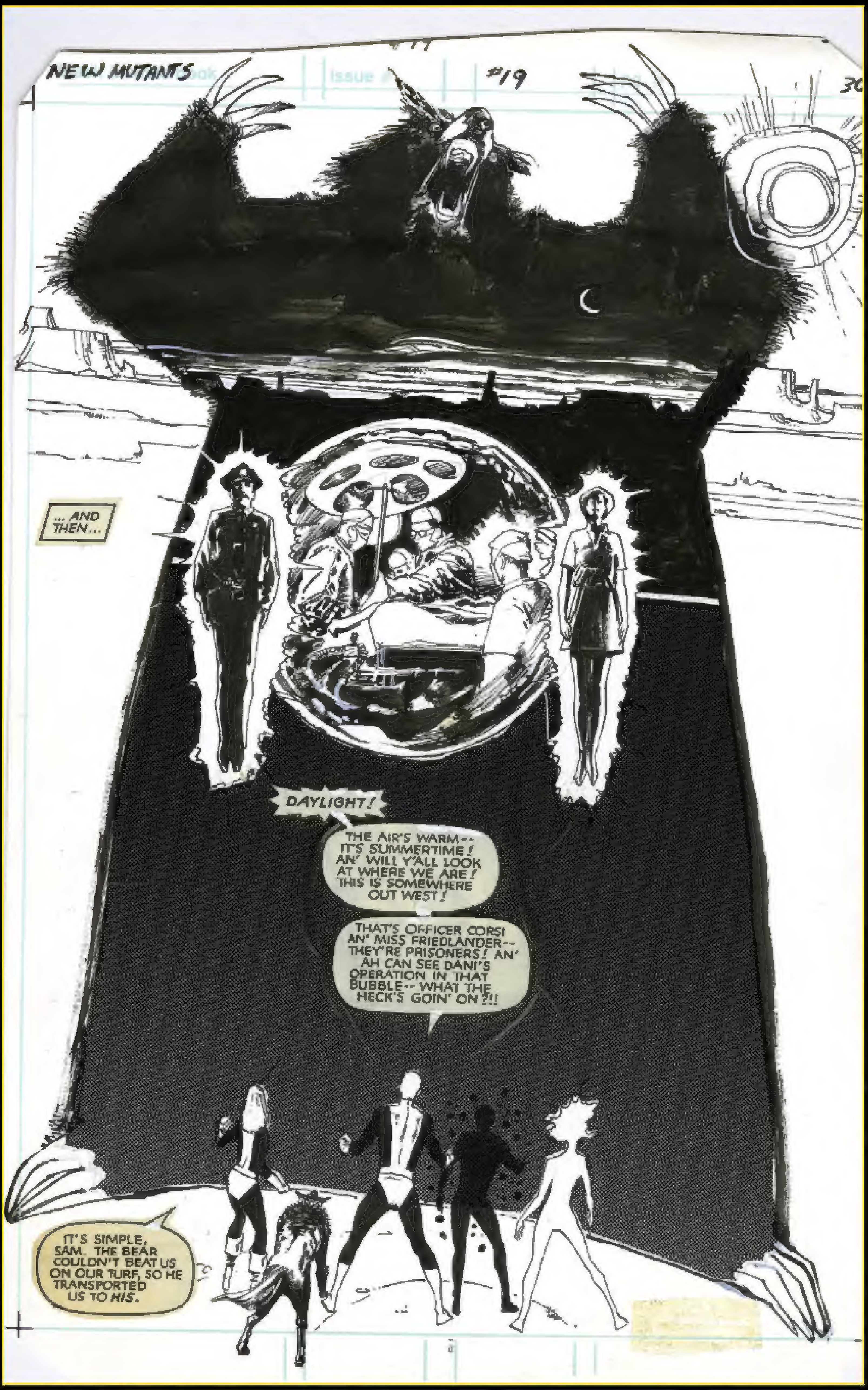
ML: Your work on *The New Mutants* is doubtless the wildest stuff you've done. The covers in particular have shown a wide range of influences from Ralph Steadman to Walt Disney.

BS: I intend to keep running back and forth, bringing in as many different elements that have influenced me as I can. I want to keep surprising the readers.

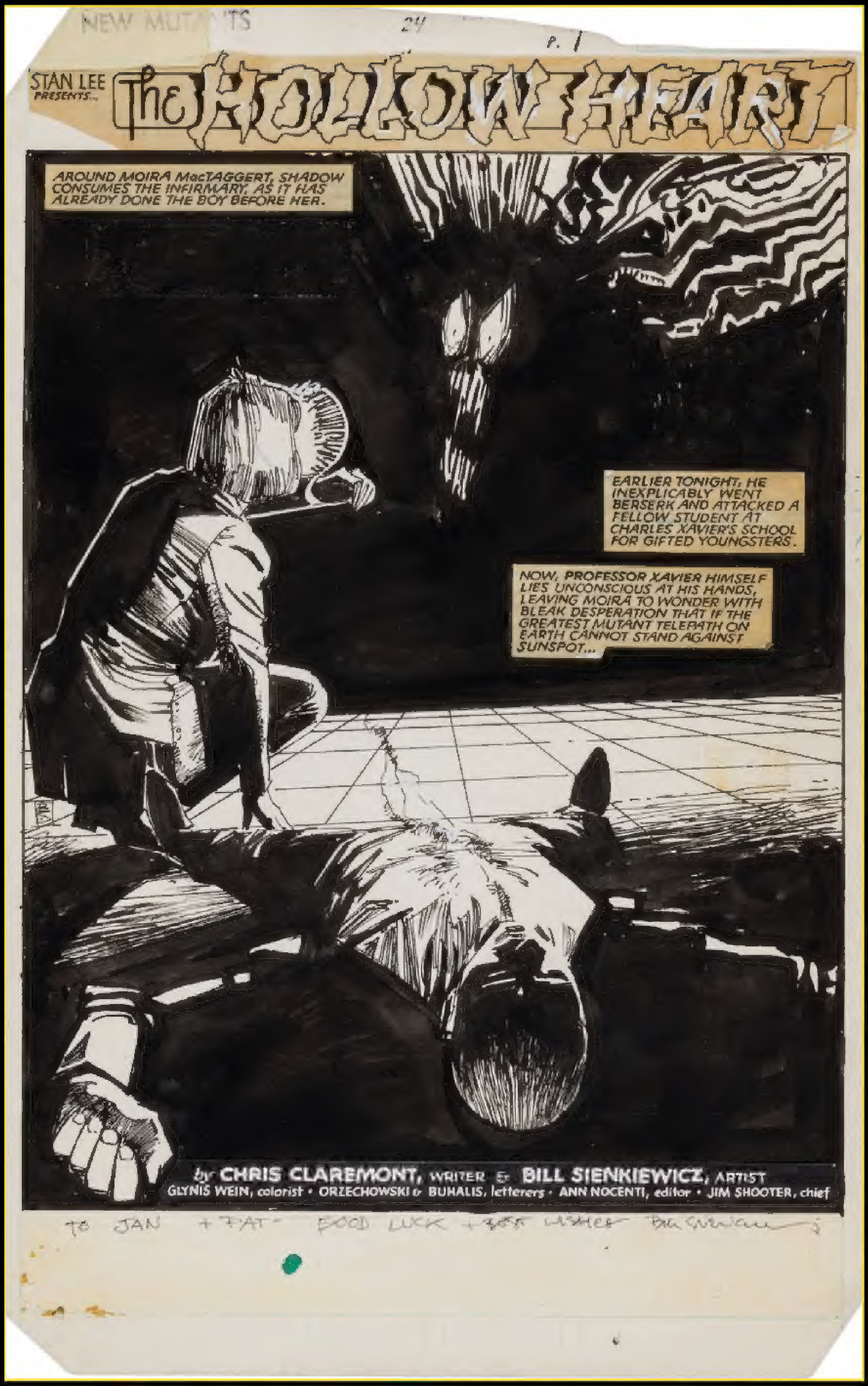
ML: What has their reaction been?

BS: The mail is polarized. Some like it and some people are really angry! I like that. Because if everyone liked it — well, that never happens. And I don't mind when people get angry at my way-out stuff — in fact, I find it gratifying. If I can keep the readers on their toes, then I can count on them looking forward to each next issue. I think readers look forward to being infuriated, surprised or exhilarated — but never bored.

I think that artists in general have a responsibility in our society to expose people to new ways of seeing things. Comics artists have that responsibility too. I'm just trying to bring all of *my* artistic experiences — the things that have influenced and excited *me* — to comics, in the hopes that I can influence or excite the readers. There have been too many people who imitate one style, whether it's Jack Kirby's or someone else's. A lot of people have never looked at or been influenced by art outside of comics. As a result, a lot of comics look too much alike. An artist should bring his own personality to the comics he draws. After all, the artists who draw comics are personalities as much as the heroes they draw.


NEW MUTANTS
#19
30
... AND THEN...
DAYLIGHT!
THE AIR'S WARM-- IT'S SUMMERTIME! AN' WILL Y'ALL LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE! THIS IS SOMEWHERE OUT WEST!
THAT'S OFFICER CORSI AN' MISS FRIEDLANDER-- THEY'RE PRISONERS! AN' AH CAN SEE DANI'S OPERATION IN THAT BUBBLE-- WHAT THE HECK'S GOIN' ON?!!
IT'S SIMPLE, SAM. THE BEAR COULDN'T BEAT US ON OUR TURF, SO HE TRANSPORTED US TO HIS.

*NEW MUTANTS #19*, PAGE 22 ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ


NEW MUTANTS
24
p. 1
STAN LEE PRESENTS...
The HOLLOW HEART
AROUND MOIRA MacTAGGERT, SHADOW CONSUMES THE INFIRMARY, AS IT HAS ALREADY DONE THE BOY BEFORE HER.
EARLIER TONIGHT, HE INEXPLICABLY WENT BERSERK AND ATTACKED A FELLOW STUDENT AT CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
NOW, PROFESSOR XAVIER HIMSELF LIES UNCONSCIOUS AT HIS HANDS, LEAVING MOIRA TO WONDER WITH BLEAK DESPERATION THAT IF THE GREATEST MUTANT TELEPATH ON EARTH CANNOT STAND AGAINST SUNSPOT...
by CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER & BILL SIENKIEWICZ, ARTIST
GLYNIS WEIN, colorist • ORZECHOWSKI & BUHALIS, letterers • ANN NOCENTI, editor • JIM SHOOTER, chief
TO JAN + PAT - GOOD LUCK + BEST WISHES

*NEW MUTANTS #24*, PAGE 1 ART BY BILL SIENKIEWICZ

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DON'T CALL THEM
X-BABIES ANYMORE!
BILL SIENKIEWICZ

Visionary artist Bill Sienkiewicz transforms the New Mutants, and the young heroes' lives will never be the same! New recruits Magma and Magik find their footing at the school — but when the team tries to rescue Kitty Pryde from Emma Frost, will they all end up as members of rival mutant team the Hellions? Then, the Demon Bear that haunts Dani Moonstar bares its teeth! Will the New Mutants survive the Bear's ferocious attack — and if so, can they make a new friend in the alien called Warlock? Plus: A cosmic caper introduces intergalactic rock star Lila Cheney! When Sunspot and Wolfsbane are in danger, only Cloak and Dagger can help! Professor X's son, Legion, makes his mind-bending debut! And an old friend/foe makes a shocking return!

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**2**
1984-1985

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NEW MUTANTS #13-31 & ANNUAL #1

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